

CURATING ACROSS
INTERFACES:
*an Account of a
(Hybrid) Expanding
Exhibition*

By **FRANCESCA BAGLIETTO**

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ABSTRACT

The practical aspect of this research has been the curation of a series of hybrid exhibitionary spaces. These exhibitionary forms have resulted from creating a series of interfaces under the umbrella of *that's contemporary*, a non-profit organization that I co-founded and have run since 2011.

In this thesis, the practice of curating is taken to be the operation of *inscribing* a program of actions (i.e. a script) into the design of interfaces; *prescribing* these actions to the users of these interfaces; and *describing* how users actually use the interface. My research argues that interfaces, by being used, unfold hybrid exhibitionary

spaces. They are hybrid because the interfaces through which the exhibition is used and produced fluctuate between digital and physical space, in a hybrid zone. In this sense, physical exhibitions are curated along with the organization of their multiple replications on digital and non-digital interfaces.

My concept of hybrid exhibitionary space is shaped by theory (Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 2005; Kennedy, 2012) that understands space to be produced by social relations meaning that users create the exhibitionary spaces they inhabit. From this point of view, the exhibition does not pre-exist its users, rather it takes place in an unrelenting process of use, opening up the possibility for its multiple descriptions to be made. This idea of use as a form of exhibition production is applied to the concept of *network curation*, which refers to a type of collective curatorial process that is engendered by users, reiterating and re-contextualizing the exhibition along digital networks.

Inspired by Actor Network Theory, the written component of this research has been interlaced together into an exhibitionary description. This method acts to document while, at the same time, it re-performs the ‘curating’ and ‘curatorial’ processes that originally gave form to these exhibitionary interfaces. In this way, the thesis turns into an interface that mediates between its exhibited objects – my practice – and its users – the readers – while, simultaneously *enacting* the research along this process of mediation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	<i>Abstract</i>
8	<i>Author's Note</i>
10	INTRODUCTION <i>Curating interfaces and the traceable exhibition</i>
10	INTERFACES
19	CURATING (ALONG NETWORKS OF INTERFACES)
27	THE EXHIBITION IS <i>TRACEABLE</i>
32	CURATING AND THE <i>NETWORK CURATION</i>
34	<i>INSCRIBING AND PRESCRIBING</i> THE EXHIBITION
36	<i>DE-SCRIBING</i> THE EXHIBITION
42	LOCATING MY RESEARCH
42	Stating the research questions
42	My contribution to knowledge
43	Exhibition as research
43	Stating the limits of my research
44	Relevant examples of curatorial practice

46	CHAPTER ONE <i>that's contemporary</i> <i>– Scripting the Interface and Beyond</i>
49	MILAN
56	SCRIPT
61	Mediation <i>Event nodes</i> <i>Place nodes</i> <i>Interrelations</i>
65	Horizontality <i>Lock-in</i>
68	TRACING 'THE EXHIBITIONARY'
77	CHALLENGING THE SCRIPT VIA CREATING NEW NODES
77	The expanded exhibition
83	The distributed studio visit

85	Exhibiting the 'visit'
88	NETWORKS OF INTERFACES
92	NETWORKS OF VALUES
98	CHAPTER TWO <i>That's App – the rise of the (exhibition) user and the mobile exhibition</i>

FIRST PART: DESIGNING THE MOBILE EXHIBITION

102	THE EXHIBITION IN MOBILITY
105	EXHIBITOR NODES
110	USER NODES
111	The use-value of the exhibition
117	The UIT (Use It Together) exhibition
121	The Self-Styled Hybrid Exhibition

SECOND PART: USING THE MOBILE EXHIBITION

130	NETWORKED SPACE (REACCOUNTING FOR THE EXHIBITION IN MOBILITY)
133	Ascribed Script (or ascription)
135	Performed script
138	NETWORK CURATING THE EXHIBITION

144	CHAPTER THREE <i>The Art Pacemaker – Curating an exhibition across interfaces</i>
148	PREPARING THE GROUND FOR THE EXHIBITION
149	SCRIPTING THE PHYSICAL EXHIBITION
156	SCRIPTING THE HYBRID EXHIBITIONARY SPACE
156	Radio script
158	Video script
160	Social media script
161	Medal (post-digital) script
164	EXHIBITING THE SCRIPT

166 **CONCLUSION**
The Thesis is the Exhibition:
Curating as Research

176	<i>Appendices</i>	222	<i>Bibliography</i>
177	APPENDIX I <i>MET – Metropolitan Milan</i> <i>or Territorially Extended Museum</i>	234	ARTICLES AND INTERFACES ON AI WEIWEI'S EXHIBITIONARY EXPERIENCE
190	APPENDIX II <i>Infographics: What is mediated?</i>	232	<i>Aknowledgements</i>
193	APPENDIX III <i>Andrea's logo proposals</i>		
195	APPENDIX IV <i>First layout of thatscontemporary.com</i>		
197	APPENDIX V <i>Google Analytics</i>		
204	APPENDIX VI <i>Rimessa (2015)</i>		
216	APPENDIX VII <i>An account of the process versus</i> <i>financial sustainability</i>		
220	APPENDIX VIII <i>Selection of author's projects</i> <i>related to this research</i>		

Digital Appendices

APPENDIX I

Mini series of three videos for the launch
of thatscontemporary.com:

- A. that's contemporary*
- B. that's contemporary city hunting*
- C. that's contemporary is contemporary art*

APPENDIX II *thatscontemporary.com – video screen capture*

APPENDIX III

Video interviews for the unrealized platform section Channel:

- A. Michael Sailstorfer, 'Solarkatze' (2012), Zero Gallery*
- B. Franco Guerzoni, 'Museo Ideale' (2012)*
Nicoletta Rusconi Gallery
- C. Marco Cadioli, 'Abstract Journeys' (2012)*
Maria Gloria Gallery
- D. 'Take the Leap', Annual Benefit, (2012) Peep-Hole*
- E. Francesco Bertocco, 'Focus Group' (2012) Room Gallery*

APPENDIX IV

That's App - video screen capture

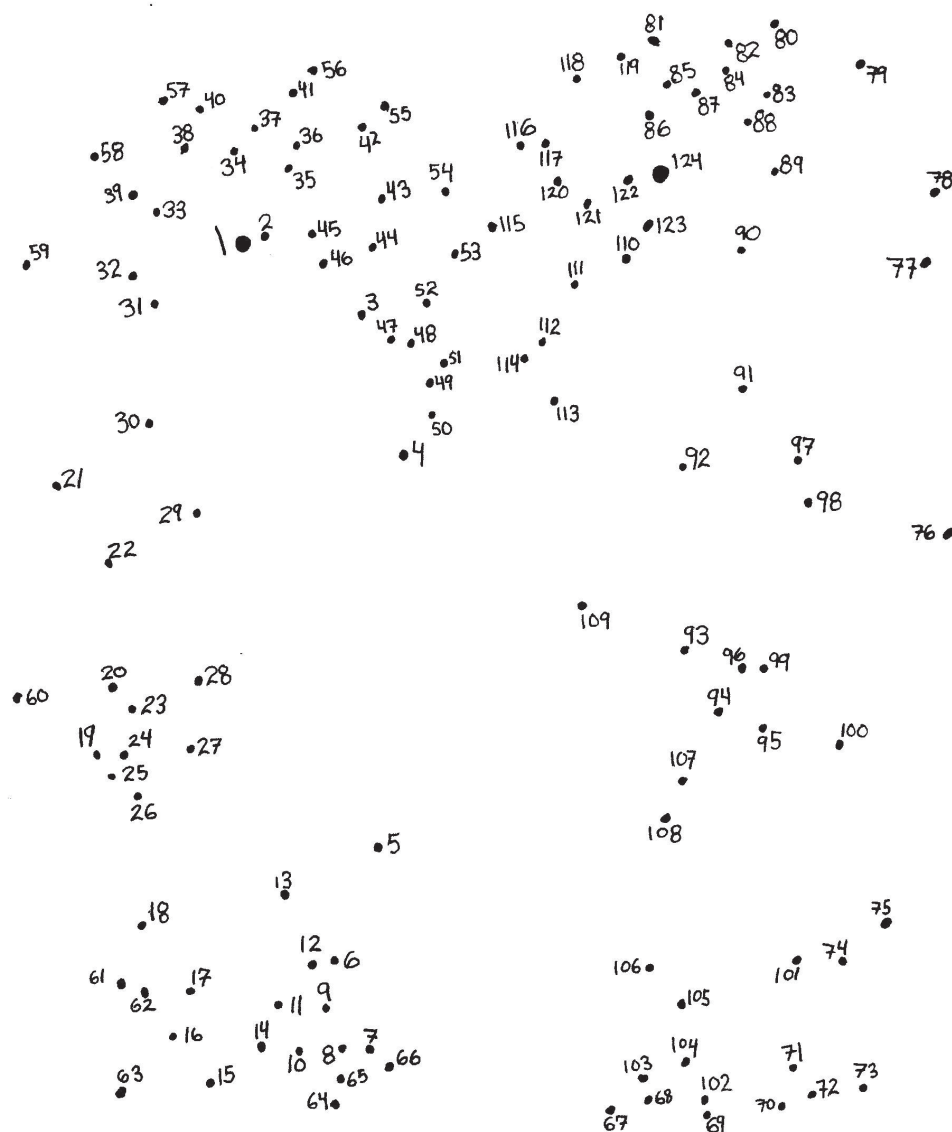
APPENDIX V

The Art Pacemaker's remediations

- A. The Art Pacemaker's video*
- B. Marco Tagliaferro's voice recording commenting*
The Art Pacemaker (part 1 and 2)
- C. That's App and The Art Pacemaker's press review*
(part 1 and 2)

AUTHOR'S NOTE

8 Writing up this thesis and collating its visual material reminded me of an extremely complex version of the childrens' game 'Connect the Dots', where the aim is to draw a figure by connecting the dots according to their numerical order. At the beginning, no form exists; there is just a congregation of disparate marks on the page. Then, as you begin to follow the dots, a shape gradually emerges, sketched to the point of becoming comprehensible. Like in the game, at the beginning of this research process, the still non-existent thesis seemed to me like a maze of unstructured information, where the dots



– the actors of my practice-based research – were too many. This exercise was rendered even more complicated by the fact that my dots, differently from those of the game, were not numbered. The possible combinations and shapes were countless and completely up to my own inclination. To ‘play’ this thesis I had to lose myself, often tracing the wrong lines or leaving out various available dots; all in order to make a readable topography. Many possible trajectories have been modified, shortened or deleted in favour of a legible narrative.

INTRODUCTION

CURATING INTERFACES AND THE TRACEABLE EXHIBITION

INTERFACES

My research commenced during the beginning of a collaboration between me and Giulia Restifo, at the time, my university colleague. Our shared interests rested on the role of technology in the mediation and circulation of art. In October 2011, with the graphic designer Andrea Amato, we turned this collaboration into a non-profit organization that we named *that's contemporary*. Under the umbrella of this organization, with the contribution of many others¹, we embarked on the development of a series of mainly, but not exclusively, digital interfaces – starting from the web platform www.thatstemporary.com. Since then, the purpose of *that's contemporary* has been to mediate between art and its


¹ Giulia Restifo, Andrea Amato and I constitute the longstanding committed team behind *that's contemporary*. Yet, it has thrived thanks to the valuable and enthusiastic contribution of practitioners who have collaborated with us for different lengths of time since 2011; such as the software developers Paolo Tesei (2011-2012), Luca Corti (2012-2016) and Stefano Fattorusso (2013-2014), the editorial contributors and curators Anna Cuomo (2012), Caterina Failla (2013-2014), Simona Squadrito (2014-ongoing) and Elisabetta Rastelli (2015-ongoing), the video makers Claudia di Lascia, Alessandro Crovi and Luca Simonelli (2011-2012), the news editors and community managers Elisabetta Bolasco (2011-2014) and Elisa Lemmo (2015-ongoing), the financial advisor Tim Oldehnburg (2012-2014), and others that I will mention throughout the thesis or that I have thanked in the acknowledgments.


publics – its ‘users’². Understanding the production of this mediation became the endeavour of my research. If at the start of my investigation I intended to share just a few of the issues that I was confronting in my role as a curator and co-founder of *that’s contemporary*, eventually such activities – which originated outside of any academic intention – became the main material of my thesis, turning my PhD into practice-based research.

Now that I have made clear the multiple roles I undertake in this research, as a scholar but also as a leading figure and curator of an organization, I am left with the question: what is my research about? One of my well-worn answers has been that my thesis attempts to reconceive what an exhibition – that I understand as a form of mediation – might be and what the practice of curating might imply in conditions of ubiquitous digitalization. These issues are explored throughout the analysis of my own curatorial practice, which is constituted by the development of a web platform and a mobile application device and the creation of an exhibition that took place in physical space as well as across a multiplicity of web and mobile platforms. This has been my best answer so far. Yet, not surprisingly, it often leads others to pick up, usually with great enthusiasm, on words such as ‘web’, ‘app’ and ‘platforms’ concluding that I was a sort of digital curator, writing about online exhibitions. I have occasionally let them think that this is the case, however I always find this summary unsatisfactory.

Although ‘being digital’ is a necessary condition of the interfaces I produce or work with, I have never felt at ease reducing them to this categorization precisely because my research aims to expose the porosity between the realms of the *digital* and the *physical*, and the rise of a third realm, the *hybrid*.

Therefore, when speaking of interfaces I refer to a *mediation* occurring in a dimension in which offline/physical spaces and online/digital spaces have merged together in *hybrid space* (de Souza e Silva, 2006; Sassen, 2006; Kluitenberg, 2006; Jordan, 2009). Consequently, in this thesis, interfaces are hybrid.

Another aspect I need to clarify of interfaces is that they are always *exhibitionary*. An interface refers to something that is between two other parties, something that allows these entities to meet and interact. In this way, an interface is a type of filter for engaging with the world (de Souza e Silva, Frith, 2012).  This could be said of exhibitions: the exhibition could be defined, in fact, as the attempt to mediate between what is exhibited and the users of the exhibition. In this sense, exhibitions are interfaces.

 “We have always needed different types of filters to interact with the world. Our bodies, language, signs, and symbols are just some examples of these filters. There have never been unmediated interactions with others or with the spaces that surround us.

**DE SOUZA E SILVA,
FRITH, 2012, P. 1**

² In this work, I will often refer to the concept of public(s) with the term user(s). I will explore the figure of the ‘user’ in the second chapter; for now, it is enough to understand users simply as the people who interact with interfaces.

✎ 'The interface is an abstraction that defines what kinds of interactions are possible with an object. It maps out the public face of the object in a way that is legible and accessible to other objects. Similarly, computer interfaces like screens and keyboards are designed to meet with human interfaces like fingers and eyes, allowing for a specific form of interaction between person and machine' (DOCKRAY, 2013, PP. 186 - 187)

I employ the term *exhibitionary* to express this correlation between exhibition and interface.

Despite its function as a filter for exchange, an (exhibitionary) interface is not neutral, rather it shapes and becomes part of the relations that it mediates. The interface negotiates the exchange: they mediate between exhibited objects and users and, by creating this relationship, they transform both objects and users into constitutive parts of the exhibition. Objects, users and the mediator become one thing: the exhibition/interface. Consequently, it is correct to say that interfaces are distributed.

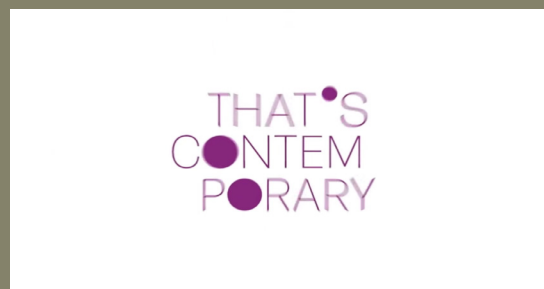
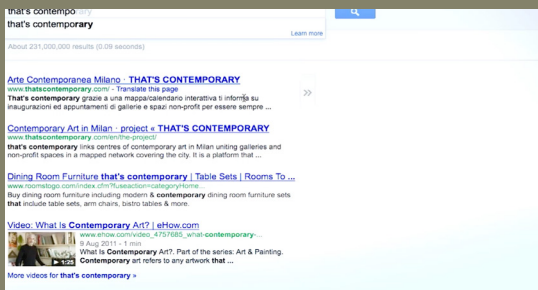
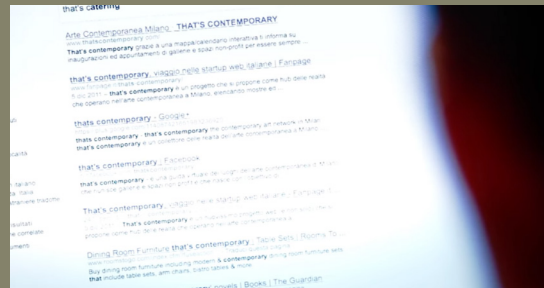
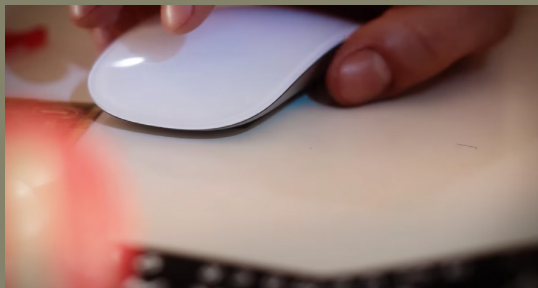
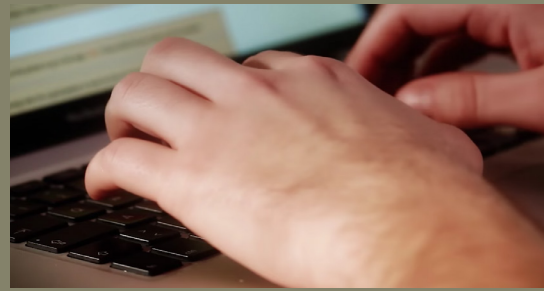
In computer language, an interface typically refers to a Graphical User Interface (GUI), which enables a user to communicate with a machine through graphic icons and visual indicators. ✎ Lev Manovich develops this definition further in *The Language of New Media* (2001) with the concept of the 'cultural interface,' a term that recognizes how interfaces – which in Manovich are 'human-computer' – organize interactions between users and 'forms of culture' (i.e. the exhibited object) and transform them in their digital form. He writes:

As distribution of all forms of culture becomes computer-based, we are increasingly "interfacing" to predominantly cultural data – texts, photographs, films, music, virtual environments. We are no longer interfacing to a computer but to culture encoded in digital form. I will use the term cultural interface to describe [...] the ways in which computers present and allow us to interact with cultural data. (MANOVICH, 2001, PP. 69-70)

Following Manovich, interfaces are 'cultural'³ because they give structure to user experience of objects, transforming these objects and their relations with other objects into gatherings of data, subject of information; they turn into 'things'⁴. This process is expanded by the fact that often the same object is the subject of mediation on many interfaces. The reiteration of the same object

3 In Manovich, 'cultural' is employed to indicate that which 'is directly used by hundreds of millions of people and [...] carries "atoms" of culture (media and information, as well as human interactions around these media and information)' (Manovich, 2011, p. 1).

4 The term 'thing' instead of 'object' is consciously used here because that which is exhibited is never just an object but a 'gathering' that embraces a broader set of components to make up the exhibited object. The word 'thing' originates from the ancient German word *Ding*, which signified a meeting place where a 'thing' (matter of concern) would be discussed. In this way, 'thing' encompasses both the animate place and inanimate idea, or matter of concern. The 'thing' summarizes my understanding of (exhibitionary) interfaces well because it encompasses both the place of mediation and the matters that are mediated. The shift from 'object' to 'thing' in the analysis of an exhibition is one of the foundational points of the exhibition 'Making Things Public' curated by Peter Weibel and Bruno Latour at the ZKM, Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe in 2005. See Bruno Latour's essay from the exhibition catalogue, 'From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public' (Latour, 2005).



In the first three weeks of October 2011, a mini series of three videos – titled, *that's contemporary*, *city hunting* and *that's contemporary is contemporary art* – was published on YouTube with a frame rate of one week from video to video. This series was aimed at promoting the launch of the web platform thatscontemporary.com, which was planned for the end of the same month.

The narrative of this series starts with a user that, browsing on Google from his laptop, finds thatscontemporary.com. The encounter with the web platform leads the user to experience an overwhelming invasion of small colored balls. In the second video, the same user – guided by thatscontemporary.com – is hunting for these balls all over Milan. Where the balls bring the user is intentionally unspecified. This is unveiled in the third video, when the user running after a ball is guided inside an exhibition in a gallery. The last shot finally reveals that following *that's contemporary's* balls the user is taken to see, and be amazed by art in Milan. Obviously, the balls stand for the dot indicators geo-locating the selected art events and exhibitions

featuring the customized Google Map interface on the web platform.

Beyond the promotional scope of the mini series, the three aspects that it represents are respectively: the interface navigated from a stationary computer, the use of the interface while moving in Milan and the 'discovery-effect' given by the curatorial mediation of space. These points will be amongst the main subjects of the first and second chapters of this thesis.

The directing, shooting and editing of the series was authored by video makers Alessandro Covi, and Claudia Di Lascia with the help of the second camera operator, Luca Simonelli. Moving image designer Francesco Deiana and graphic designer Andrea Amato curated the graphics and composited the video. These videos were commissioned by Giulia and I.

Screenshots on this page are taken from the first video of the series, *that's contemporary* (2011), which is available as digital appendix (n°1, a) and on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tsBWBHYLY4>

along a *network of interfaces* creates an extended *hybrid exhibitionary space* for that object, in which mediations, use and exchanges are negotiated multiple times. In this configuration, the network of interfaces becomes one distributed exhibitionary interface itself, forming an exhibitionary space that is an enlarged gathering of information in a constant process of becoming.

In light of all of this, an interface is evidently no longer referring merely to interactions between hardware or software, but to a larger set of technosocial interactions that Joasia Krysa in the online article ‘Some Questions on Curating as (Public) Interface to the Art Market’ (2013) has defined as a ‘distributed interface’. She writes, ‘the technological system (software) along with the curator and the public becomes the interface; a ‘distributed interface’ (Krysa, 2013). To make this clear, I would like to illustrate an example of such distributed interfaces or, as I will refer in my thesis, of hybrid exhibitionary space. Specifically, I propose to *trace*⁵ my own *hybrid use* of an exhibition occurring in a temporal span that comprises of *before*, *during* and *after* visiting a physical exhibition space.

5 I will explain the key role of ‘tracing’ later on in the introduction. Yet, it is already worthwhile to anticipate that the statement, ‘to trace my own hybrid use of the exhibition’ means to make an account of an exhibitionary experience via following a user that moves from physical space to digital space and viceversa, through a whole series of connected information, thus a hybrid exhibitionary network.

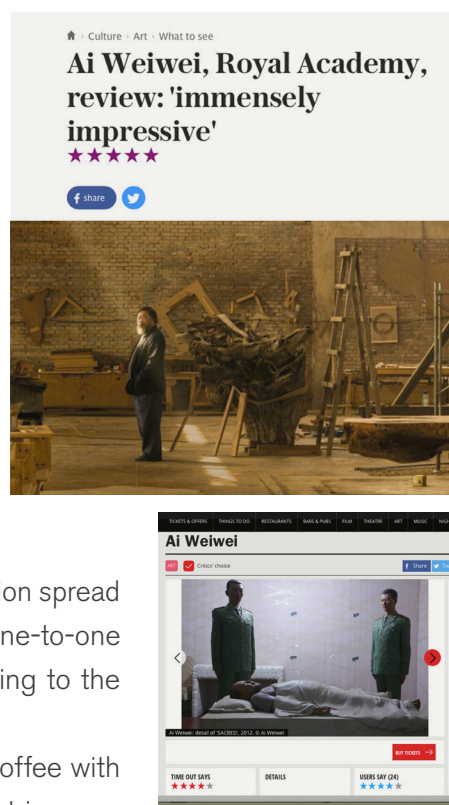


ON 3RD DECEMBER 2015, I VISITED THE RETROSPECTIVE OF AI WEIWEI AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS (RA) IN LONDON.

* BEFORE THE VISIT...

I start to see billboards about the exhibition in tube stations a few months in advance. At the time of the exhibition opening, between 15th and 20th September, the web start to proliferate with reviews defining the exhibition with labels such as 'momentous and moving' in The Guardian, or 'immensely impressive' in the Telegraph. Both give a critical rating of four to five stars. At the same time, TimeOut announces the exhibition as one of the, 'Top 10 art exhibitions in London' (TimeOut, 2015). Other newspapers, such as The Independent were similarly enthusiastic while some others were less so, such as The Evening Standard. Besides, both online and offline information spread through word-of-mouth, the timeless practice of one-to-one opinion-making between personal contacts, adding to the exhibition's appeal.

It is already mid-November when I have a coffee with a friend who defines the exhibition as 'magnificent in every sense: the political discourse, the aesthetic outcome and also the curatorial narrative'.



INTRODUCTION

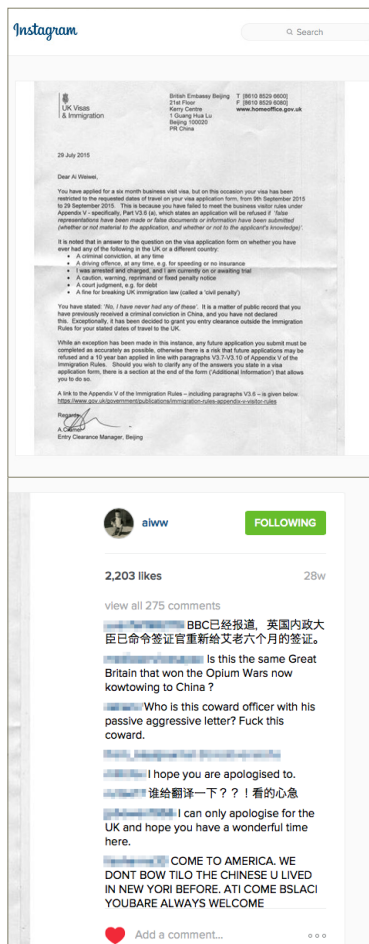
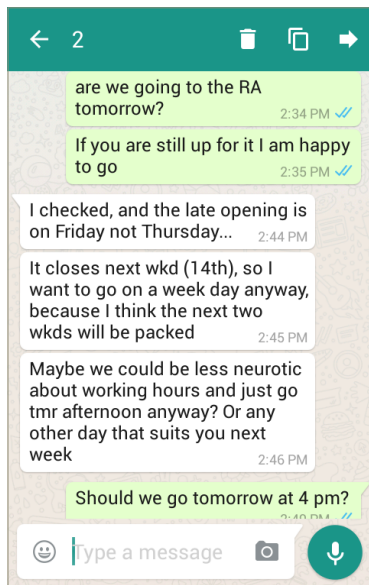
The abundant media coverage and public consensus on Ai Weiwei's retrospective makes this exhibition quickly become one of those 'must-see shows' that are not to be missed. At the end of November another friend and I, decide to visit the exhibition together. After a casual mention during a lunch break and, eventually, via a whatsapp conversation, we manage to agree a mid-week day to go, avoiding the weekend crowd. Nevertheless, given the popularity of the event, booking was highly recommended so my friend buys two student-tickets online on the RA web store and books our entrances for the 4 pm time slot. Yet, despite this seemingly strict time frame, my exhibitionary experience has clearly already started.

Now, in writing this section, I intend to re-perform the web navigation history of that night as a method for re-tracing my exhibitionary journey. I will explain this methodology later in the introduction.

To start with, I have a quick glimpse at the user rating on Time Out, which indicates four to five stars. The majority of users' comments are positive; yet I paused and reflected on someone's observation that the exhibition focuses too much on the artists' political situation than on the artwork itself (Sim R, 2015). Then, while reading The Guardian's review published on September 20th (Cumming, 2015) I am sent into various other pages discussing Weiwei's life and career through a series of links. For instance, I click on a link that directs me to an article about the occasion when the Chinese authorities tore down Weiwei's studio in 2011 (Wong, 2011). Then, via another link, I land on Weiwei's Instagram profile where a scan of a document processed by the UK immigration services depicts the restrictions applied on the artist's VISA request, thus showing the complications the artist went through to travel from China to the UK for the RA exhibition (Weiwei, 2015). After this, another link directs my navigation to

the MIT Press page dedicated to a book compiling a series of entries from Weiwei's blog deemed as too controversial by the government, who proceeded to close down the site and imprison the artist for eighty-one days (Weiwei, 2011).

The same review also reproduces the 2010 monumental work that covered half of the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall with



sunflower seeds and offers another link connecting me to another review about the installation back in 2010 (Cumming, 2010). Towards the end of the review, making a connection with the strategy of using popular cultural icons as a way to make political statements, the critic makes a comparison between Weiwei's exhibition and another exhibition 'The World Goes Pop' (2015) concurrently showing at Tate Modern. This digression provides another link connected to Tate's website, giving users an opportunity to disperse their navigation into a journey on politically-engaged art that arrives at further information about Weiwei's work. These insights pieced together ascribe a strong political narrative to the exhibition I am about to physically visit.

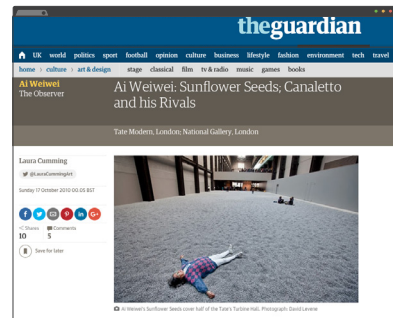
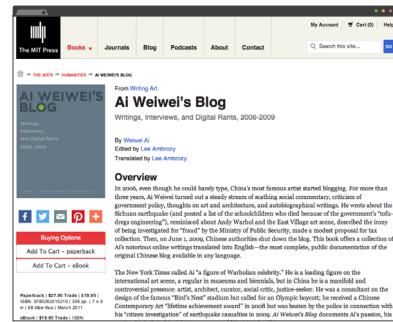
* DURING THE VISIT...

The day after, on arrival at the RA with my friend, we collect our tickets, drop off our jackets, and pick up the exhibition booklet and audio-visual guide. With the use of these tools, the exhibitionary visit itself become hybrid, dwelling between the virtual dimension of the guide and physical space of the gallery with its artworks. While seeing the works on show, the audio guide, which on a screen provides an interactive list of videos and galleries of images, delivers both technical information about the manufacture of the works as well as interpretations and narratives behind their production. The audio contributions are mostly monologues authored by the artist and exhibition curators, with an additional narrator, who interconnects these segments. Along with the portable guide's narrative, I can view two videos, which are also on display in the exhibition space⁶. Together with the information delivered by the audio guide, these videos weave together a narrative account, framing and giving sense to the exhibited artworks.

Throughout the exhibition, I take a series of photos using my smartphone and its in-built camera. I post them in realtime on both Twitter and Instagram. Once

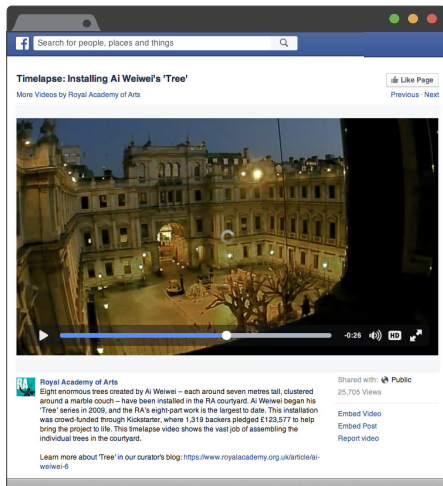
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One video documents the demolition of Ai Weiwei's studio, his arrest and a dinner of hundreds of guests to mark the destruction, which he could not attend himself as he was in the police. The other video shows the making of *Straight* (2008-2012), an installation of twisted metal that had been straightened by hand after being collected from demolished by an earthquake in 2008. Due to the poor construction of the building, it took short cuts to siphon off money, 5,000 children died as their school collapsed.



This is a picture I took of the audio guide during my visit at the Ai Weiwei's exhibition at RA.





my visit is about to draw to a close, I am surprised to notice a video screen in the hall entrance of the RA displaying the stream of #AiWeiWei Instagram posted in the last hour, in which I could spot the image I had just taken. In leaving the gallery, I stop to look at the installation mounted in the courtyard of the building, *Tree* (2015), and am amazed by its monumentality.

* AFTER THE VISIT...

The day after, by browsing more information about this installation, I have learnt via a Facebook post that *Tree* 'was crowd-funded through Kickstarter, where 1,319 backers pledged £123,577 to help bring the project to life' (Royal Academy of Arts, 2015).

I would like to highlight four crucial and intermingling aspects of my thinking that can be found throughout this research and that my account of Ai Weiwei's exhibition suggests. The premise behind these four points is to examine the ways in which I consider the exhibition to exist via experience and not as a static entity, where experience takes place through the use of interfaces. For this reason, in this thesis the terms 'exhibition' and 'exhibitionary experience' coincide. Therefore, I understand that:

The exhibition is an experience that is always mediated by interfaces. This means that I intend Ai Weiwei's exhibition not only within the physical exhibition space of the RA, but as an experience distributed amongst multiple digital and physical interfaces through which users connect with the exhibited 'things'. Therefore, the exhibition is experienced – and exists – through the use of these interfaces. My experience as a user of Weiwei's exhibition transitioned from seeing *billboards* in the streets of London, to *browsing reviews* on the web, to conversing with friends over coffee or via *whatsapp* chats, to *emailing* tickets that were shopped online, to using an interactive guide and a series of mobile apps on my smartphone, producing and adding content online. In other words, from the very beginning, my exhibitionary experience of Weiwei's show has been distributed in a network of physical and digital interfaces. If, according to Marshall McLuhan (1964), the medium is the message, the exhibition is a network of interfaces, which both reproduce culture and are in turn culture themselves.

The exhibition is hybrid. This is because interfaces hold users between

online and offline space. They mediate user exhibitionary experience, connecting digital information to physical objects and back again to digital information. This is clearly exemplified by the use of the audio guide and smartphone connected to the Internet while I walk around in the physical exhibition. In this example, my experience of the exhibition dwells between the recorded voices and images from the guide and the exhibition setting that are objects in physical space. Information gathered offline effects my navigation online and vice versa.

While the first two points were already stated in this introduction, the following two are new and will be discussed further later on in this thesis.

The exhibition is curated while being used, which is a direct effect of the fact that an exhibition exists in experience. In taking a picture and uploading it on Instagram, I have further distributed the space of Weiwei's exhibition. The reviews, comments, ratings, images, tweets, posts, fund-raising campaigns and hash-tags relating to Weiwei's show are available on a multiplicity of web and mobile platforms. This constitutes a crowd-sourced and user-generated exhibitionary space that unfolds along a network of interfaces that co-exist with those created by the RA. As I will state in the second chapter, the exhibition is created from the use-value that is produced in the 'lifeworld' of its individual users⁷.

Hierarchies and authorships blur along the making process of the exhibition. The exhibition unfolds through user experience as a network connecting different exhibitionary entities (i.e. artworks, tools, contents, money, organizers and users). In tracing my exhibitionary experience, I have not just stressed the work of Weiwei and the curators, but I have also accounted for the user-generated content that enriched my experience. As I have written already, once the visit was over, I searched on the Internet for more information not only about the artist, but also about the crowd-funding method that enabled the installation in the RA's courtyard to be constructed.

CURATING (ALONG NETWORKS OF INTERFACES)

With the ubiquity of social, mobile web and networking platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr, as well as YouTube and Vimeo for video

⁷ Use-value is a concept that was originally deployed by Karl Marx in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) in his critique to political economy and refers to the utility of consuming a good. For Marx, products have a labor-value and a use-value. In the second chapter I will borrow the concept of use-value, along with other aligned understandings of use in art (Wright, 2007, 2013; Bruguera, 2012; Agamben, 2007), and apply it to the exhibition. In relation to use-value is the term 'lifeworld', which refers to, 'all the immediate experiences, activities, and contacts that make up the world of an individual life' (Oxford Dictionary, 2016). Therefore, the exhibition understood as produced in the lifeworld of its users means that it is not only constructed in experience but also unique for each individual.

↳ '[I]n the wake of social media, the majority of views an artist's work gets online is often not through her own website, but through the accumulated network of reblogs, links, and digital reproductions that follow it through social media. One can think of this as the long tail of art's viewership, where no single reblog constitutes a wider viewing audience than the artist's own accumulated audience on her website, but all those tiny reblogs added together (and the number of viewers they attracted) constitute a larger statistical whole.'

(TROEMEL, 2014, P. 39)

sharing, *interfaces* mediate art on a daily basis. Brad Troemel in 'Art After Social Media' (2014) argues how artists, galleries and curators and their audiences use these platforms *to curate* their own work and professional identities, which has an impact on the way art is presented, encountered and used. ↳

Now, despite the fact that these platforms form a pervasive arena impacting on the ways art circulates and, therefore, is encountered, used and understood, these modes and structures are still understood as outside of mainstream curatorial practice. As Omar Kholeif has expressed in the 'The Curator's New Medium', 'it seems perplexing that [...] little attention is being directed at how the still relatively new medium that is the Internet has started to shift the hierarchies by which conventional curatorial practice is admired, taught, and implemented in the contemporary sphere' (Kholeif, 2014, p. 79). In line with Kholeif's claim is an online review by Loney Abrams (2013) on Paul O'Neill's book *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* (2012) that highlights a certain blindness of the author in recognizing the impact that the Internet is having upon contemporary curation. She writes:

[T]he temporary art exhibition has become the ultimate medium in the distribution and reception of art; O'Neill writes. [...] I would argue that the art

exhibition is *not* the ultimate medium in the distribution, or the reception of art—the Internet is. The majority of art's audience [...] come[s] to know works primarily through their documentation online (whether documented by exhibition organizers, the artists, or the audience) and through the language that surrounds them (through criticism and reviews, but also through reblogging and sharing on social media sites). (ABRAMS, 2013)

In this review, Abrams' critique is grounded on the fact that O'Neill describes the historical process of the *professionalization* of curation within the art world but completely failed to recognize the emergence of a new generation of curators, that operate via blogs and social media, who are inherently *unprofessionalized*. Yet, precisely because, as Abrams notices, online exhibitionary spaces are where art is mostly experienced in the form of documentation, what is needed is a better understanding of the larger context in which the distribution and reception of art operates outside of the physical gallery. She queries, 'if we primarily come to know art online, then what role does online curation play in the contemporary

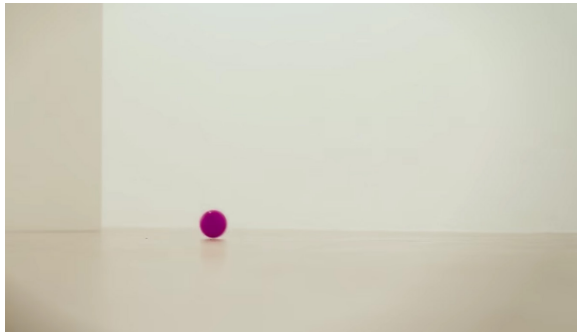
art world?’ (Abrams, 2013).

In order to embrace Abrams’ proposal, I would like to briefly digress and explore ‘curating’ outside its traditional usage within an art context. Indeed, a curatorial culture on the Internet emerged as a consequence of the increasing digitalization of culture and the phenomenon of *prosumption*⁸. As a matter of fact, when users started to produce and upload their own content – giving rise to the Web 2.0 – the volume of information on the Internet increased tremendously; to curate was a method to make sense of an otherwise unmanageable amount of textual, visual and sound material. Curating on the Internet became synonymous to filtering and organizing information into coherent, reasonably contextual groups. Wikis, blogs and social media all became platforms for curating content. Yet, distinctions should be made between the various declarations of what curation is that have been proliferating on the Internet. Daniel Ashton and Martin Couzins in ‘Content Curators as Cultural Intermediaries’ (2015) have differentiated between ‘curating for others’ and ‘curating for and about me’⁹.

The phrase ‘curating for others’ refers mainly to platforms that curate via selecting and displaying cultural products providing users with guidance and clarity. For example, I watch films on Mubi, a platform that curates a narrow selection of films every day. Mubi finds, organizes, contextualizes and shares what Mubi’s curators consider to be the ‘best films’ available, a selection made by team of ‘film buffs’ who are supposed to be in-the-know. Basically, Mubi curates for me as well as for other users. Its recognisability is the outcome of a curatorial activity understood as an ingenious process carried out by experts. This is expressed by Cairns and Birchall, who say that ‘the emergence of the idea of curating as a digital activity seemed to come from contemporary art’s understanding of curation as an authorial act’ (Cairns and Birchall, 2013). They highlight that with curators such as Harald Szeemann and Walter Hopps, the role of the curator has moved away from the original position, a ‘caretaker’ of a museum’s collection, to the figure of the *auteur* for whom ‘the act of curating was [...] about the creation of new forms and experiences using the raw material of art’ (Cairns and Birchall, 2013). A position that is in line with that of curator Nicolas Bourriaud in *Postproduction* (2002). He brought into play the figure of the DJ as representative of a generation of artists who were no longer dealing with the question ‘what can we make that is new?’ but rather with ‘how can we

8 Prosumption is a term that embraces both production and consumption instead of focusing on either one or the other. In George Ritzer and Nathan Jurgenson’s abstract for the paper, ‘Production, Consumption, Prosumption: the Nature of Capitalism in the Age of the Digital ‘Prosumer’ (2010), it is stated that ‘earlier forms of capitalism (producer and consumer capitalism) were themselves characterized by prosumption’ (Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010). Yet, in light of the more recent explosion of user-generated content, the web 2.0, the authors focuses on the increasingly central role played by the phenomenon of prosumption in contemporary capitalism. As they explain, ‘in prosumer capitalism, control and exploitation take on a different character than in the other forms of capitalism: there is a trend toward unpaid rather than paid labor and toward offering products at no cost, and the system is marked by a new abundance where scarcity once predominated’ (ibid.).

9 Ashton and Couzins draw on Bourdieu’s concept of cultural intermediaries, which I will further analyze in the first chapter.



Screenshots taken from *that's contemporary is contemporary art* (2011), the third video of the mini series produced and published for the launch of thatscontemporary.com. The video highlights the function of mediation carried out by *that's contemporary*, directly impacting on the relation between the user and his experience of art in Milan. The video is available as a digital appendix (n°1, c) and on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndlo6wrPfHU>

make do with what we have?' (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 11). With *that's contemporary*, which I will describe in depth in the first chapter, I 'curate for others' in a similar fashion to Mubi. I display a selection of exhibitions and events in Milan and put them in relation to 'relevant content' available on the web. In doing so, I carry out the work of the curator author, who elevates certain physical and media objects over others in the creation of the exhibition (the content may be artworks, images, texts or any other cultural material), thus, effecting users' daily findings and experiences of art in Milan.

The 'curate for other's proposition' is followed by other art-related platforms, such as Artsy, curating information about artworks, artists, galleries, fairs and auctions. Other platforms heighten their impact offline by curating art activities in delimited urban area and organizing activities in physical space such as events, talks and exhibitions (for example South London Art Map and ArtLicks). Obviously, the authorial intention of curating for others does not deny the fact that such content is manipulated by users through their interactions.

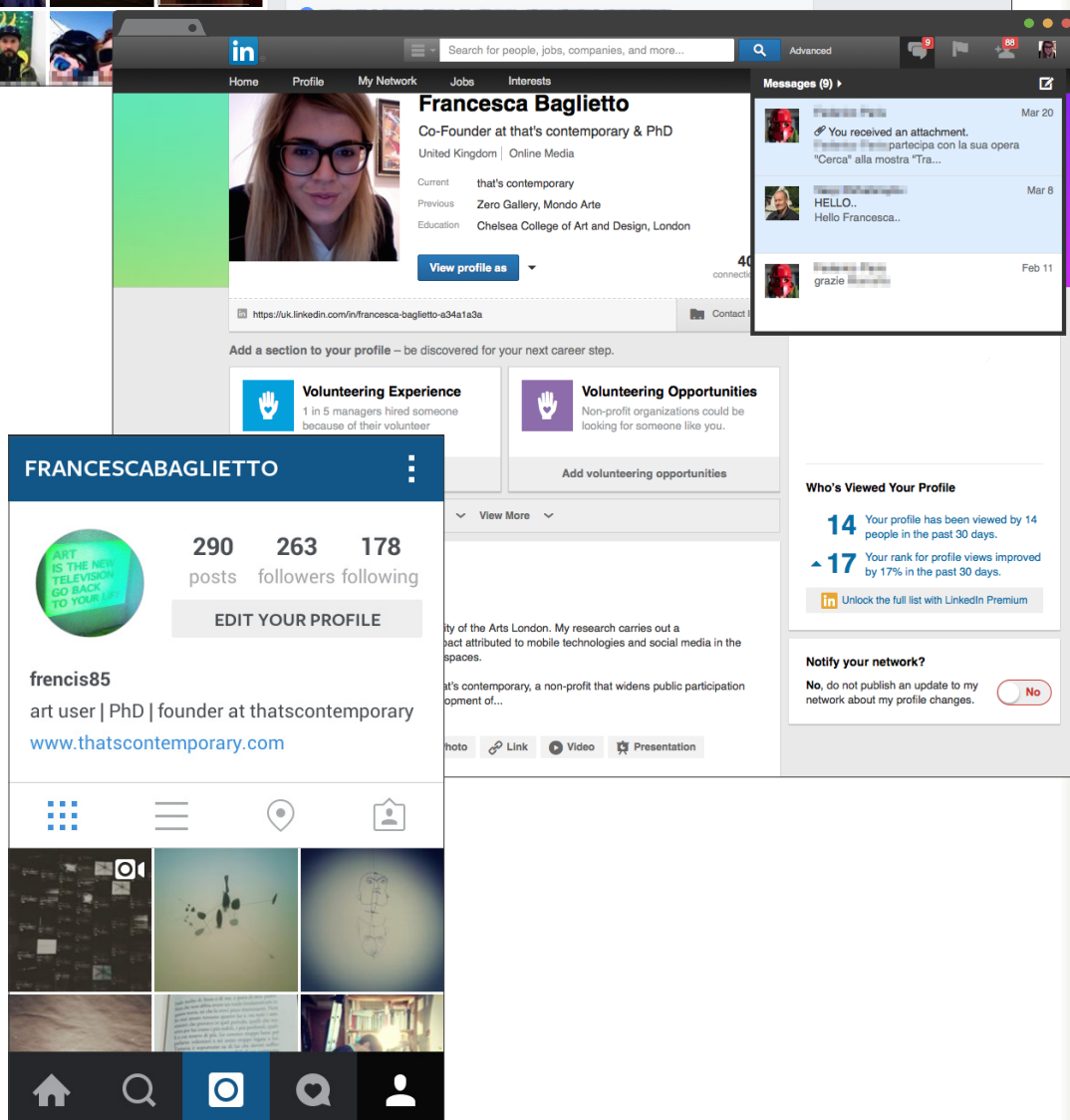
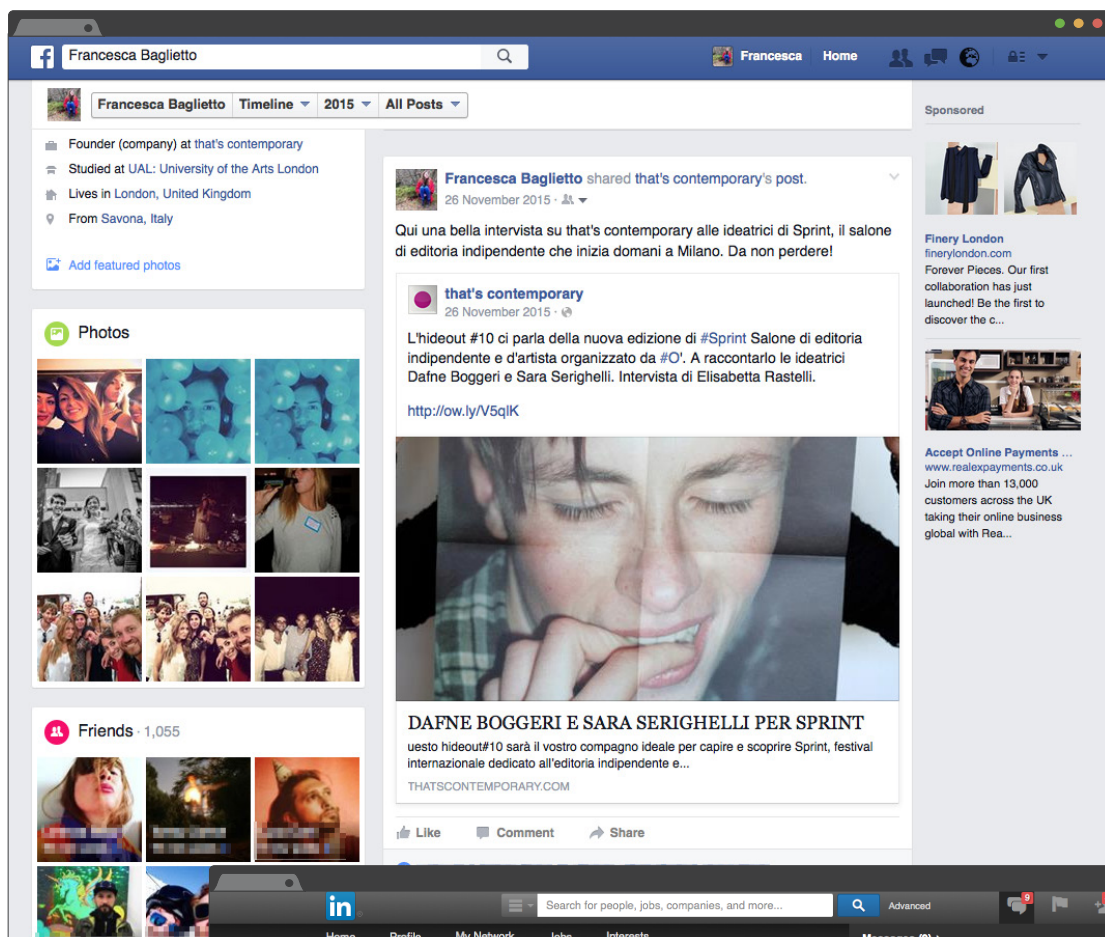
A different (but, as I will explain, compensatory) proposition is taken by social media platforms that are made available for users to mainly 'curate themselves'. Ashton and Couzins have categorized this as, 'curation for me and about me' (Ashton and Couzins, 2015). I would say that I – admittedly in a fairly inconsistent way – curate myself online via Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Academia.edu. On these social media platforms I curate my own identity, sometimes exposing my private life and at other times my professional persona. On Facebook I share petitions, articles, events and some personal images, I also 'like' and 'comment' on other profiles. In general, I tend to mix my academic or work achievements with personal occurrences. On Instagram I mainly post images of artworks, exhibitions and places, occasionally using

them as a background for selfies. While on LinkedIn (as much as I can) I try to keep my account updated with my work experience, education, awards and links to the interfaces I have created, my profile on Academia.edu focuses on my academic writing and interests. In this sense, ‘curating about me’ is about constructing an aggregate identity across multiple platforms; an identity made of personal judgments and facts that are aimed (consciously or not) at increasing my appreciation amongst followers and friends. *To curate* is an activity that I pursue as a ‘way of being in the world’.

Therefore, while ‘curating for others’ might be recognized as a profession (despite the fact that it is often characterized by a high degree of de-professionalization), ‘curating for and about me’ is a commonly shared practice of being. Yet, this distinction between ‘curating for others’ and ‘curating for me and about me’ blurs because those curating tools such as, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn that individuals use to curate themselves are largely utilized by companies, institutions, as well as digital firms, including *that’s contemporary*, to pursue the activity of ‘curating for others’. As a matter of fact, I curate content for *that’s contemporary* on Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Instagram re-posting and re-contextualizing events, exhibitions, artworks and news that have already been curated on *that’s contemporary*’s interfaces. The result is that I curate *that’s contemporary* on *thatscontemporary.com* as well as on other social media platforms, *but* I also curate myself as a curator of *that’s contemporary* via sharing posts on my social media profiles that are then published on *thatscontemporary.com* and shared via its own social media.

This on-going re-curation of content unfolds forming an exhibitionary space that exposes the paradoxical disposition of a curator that, like myself, operates according to an idea of the Internet as a distributed arena based on a culture of sharing. At the same time, it accentuates the extensiveness of an Internet attention economy in which distributed consensus serves the logic of any market, not excluding the arts one. This condition is reflected on what Troemel (2014) writes about the relationship between art and its dissemination via social media platforms, therefore between the exhibited object and its exhibitionary space, which is stated as it follows:

On one hand, there exists [...] a world where intellectual property is part of a commons, where authorship is synonymous with viewership, and where distinctions between art and everyday life are fluid. On the other hand, there is the competitive art market, where an unprecedented number of artists [and curators] uses marketing and business strategies like mini-corporate brands to develop their online-specific personas and their output (both personal and artistic) for maximum attention and successful careers. (TROEMEL, 2014, P. 37)



In this act of curating *that's contemporary* at the same time as curating myself as a curator of *that's contemporary*, I play two roles, which seem to merge into each other. On the one hand, to curate is my job. Even though, above all at the beginning, I was working without remuneration, I hoped that such devotion would eventually lead to some kind of employment. In this sense, it could be said that the work of a curator has similarities with that of the entrepreneur. On the other hand, to curate is also an activity I pursue outside of what I determine to be my duties as a curator at *that's contemporary*. When I curate myself as a curator of *that's contemporary* on my social media interfaces, I am actually pursuing my profession beyond traditional boundaries of work. To frame this type of engagement, Marina Vishmidt in 'Twilight of the widgets: notes on immateriality and value' (2006) describes the figure of the *amateur*, where this term is subverted from its previous demeaning connotation. With the figure of the amateur, Vishmidt describes the problematic condition that all of lived time becomes absorbed into productive circuits; a type of engagement 'beyond measure' that 'embodies the indiscernibility of life and work, a desideratum for capital that would incorporate 'whatever' moment of existence as potentially creative of value' (Vishmidt, 2006, p. 52). The figure of the amateur is therefore a type of 'user', where life becomes indistinguishable from work. This seems to describe my own condition, in which the activity of curating in my 'play time' is often addressed to validate my professional persona. In other words, curation carried out in a time away from work turns into a type of labor that, even though it might be not perceived as such, contributes to a reputational economy, which expresses itself within an exhibitionary space in which the subjectivity of users – like myself – becomes the exhibited object, the 'thing' on show. In this configuration, the discipline of curating intended as professional activity and curation carried out in the time out of work become impossible to separate¹⁰. They turned coextensive with the rise of a *super user* (Schultz, 2005), or the *super curator*. ➡

➡ [N]either professional nor amateur,
neither hobbyist nor self employed,
between sofa and kitchen table,
sometimes expert, sometimes
dilettante [...] Living from project
to project and shifting between
unemployment and immediate
wealth, the power user has left the
factories and office buildings long
ago to stay home and be the post-
industrial anti-hero. [...] Everyone is a
power user now, dependent on their
degree of participation in the global
communication apparatus. (SCHULTZ,
2005, P.111)

10 The inseparability between life and work is an idea expressed in the concept of immaterial labour, which was coined first by Maurizio Lazzarato in the essay 'Immaterial Labor' published, as a contribution to *Radical Thought in Italy*, edited by Michael Hardt and Paolo Virno in 2006. According to Lazzarato, '[t]he concept of immaterial labor refers to two different aspects of labor. On the one hand, as regards the 'informational content' of the commodity, it refers directly to the changes taking place in workers' labor processes [...] where the skills involved in direct labor are increasingly skills involving cybernetics and computer control. [...] On the other hand, as regards the activity that produces the 'cultural content' of the commodity, immaterial labor involves a series of activities that are not normally recognized as 'work' - in other words, the kinds of activities involved in defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms, and, more strategically, public opinion' (Lazzarato, 2006, p. 132). Since then, the concept of immaterial labour has been related to the affective and cognitive commodities that stem from internet-based work occurring outside the conventional wage-based understanding of labour. User-generated content production and the emergence of reputational economies are direct illustrations of such immaterial labor.

This overlapping role is expressed in the mechanism of all those platforms in which the curatorial task of imparting value is explicitly given to users – no matter if they represent themselves as individuals or if they curate on behalf of an organization. Regarding art-related platforms, there are different models where users might aggregate, select and filter information about artworks, artists and users (ArtStack); or about art venues and exhibitions (ArtRabbit). In these distributed exhibitionary spaces, users curate as an expression of their individual authorial activity. Yet, this authorial activity is no longer precluded to one user curator as a repository within an ‘expert culture’, rather it is shared by a collectivity of *user curators*. In this configuration, the authorship of the exhibitionary space is distributed along a network in which users curate the exhibitionary space they commonly inhabit and use.

What distinguishes myself as a curator, in the more traditional sense of the author, from users of the platform is the recognizable fact that I have designed and set up the structure of the platform *thatscontemporary.com*. I did not just create the exhibited content but also the framework in which this material is used. In this sense, I have operated as *author curator*.

The demarcation between the ‘author curator’ and the ‘user curator’ is found in the genealogy of the term ‘curating’, which stems from the traditional curatorial task of ‘caring’ for objects and collections. As Joasia Krysa (2013) states, if we put the operation of caring in relation to technological systems, curators actually take care of social ‘interaction’ and ‘cooperation’, which means ‘caring about the efficiency of the system through the interface of curating’ (Krysa, 2013). This might be an answer to Abrams’ question about the role of online curation in the contemporary art field, where creating and running interfaces that specifically curate art means to manage a ‘complex socio-technical system’ which, borrowing Krysa’s words, ‘facilitates curatorial process with various degrees of participation and interaction of multiple human (the public at large) and non-human agents (software, network)’ (ibid).

Therefore, there is an important distinction that has to be made between curating as the activity of constructing the exhibitionary system and curating the material that is exhibited in this system. The first operation of curation retains a certain degree of authorship into the designing of the structure and the ‘rules’ of engagement of the interaction within and between interfaces. Curating the system is the exclusive task of author curators. The second operation, which coincides with the selection and display of the material made visible within and across interfaces, is an operation that is shared between author curators and user curators.

Bearing this differentiation between author curator and user curator in mind, my thesis aims to discuss my practice as a curator in these terms:

I create interfaces, which, as I will further explain, I understand as a way to prescribe a program of actions to users to undertake. In carrying out



these actions, users self-produce the exhibitionary spaces they use. The way users inhabit these exhibitionary spaces – the actual use of these exhibitionary spaces – can never totally coincide with the way the curators predict them.

Screenshots taken from *city hunting* (2011) the second video of the mini series produced for the launch of thatscontemporary.com. It evidences how the user moves in hybrid space. The video is available as digital appendix (n°1 b) and on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBxBOzbCQYM>

I select, organize and present art-related information on these interfaces and on other interfaces that I have not created but on which I curate. In this way, I do not just curate information within a single interface but across multiple interfaces.

Such information is used and, therefore, re-curated by other users along networks of interfaces through which the exhibition is engendered as an entity in a state of becoming. Users constantly shuffle and negotiate the hierarchies and interpretations that I establish in my initial curation.

Given that the experience/use of the exhibition is mediated along networks of interfaces, the exhibition is always hybrid because interfaces hold user experience between online and offline spaces.

THE EXHIBITION IS TRACEABLE

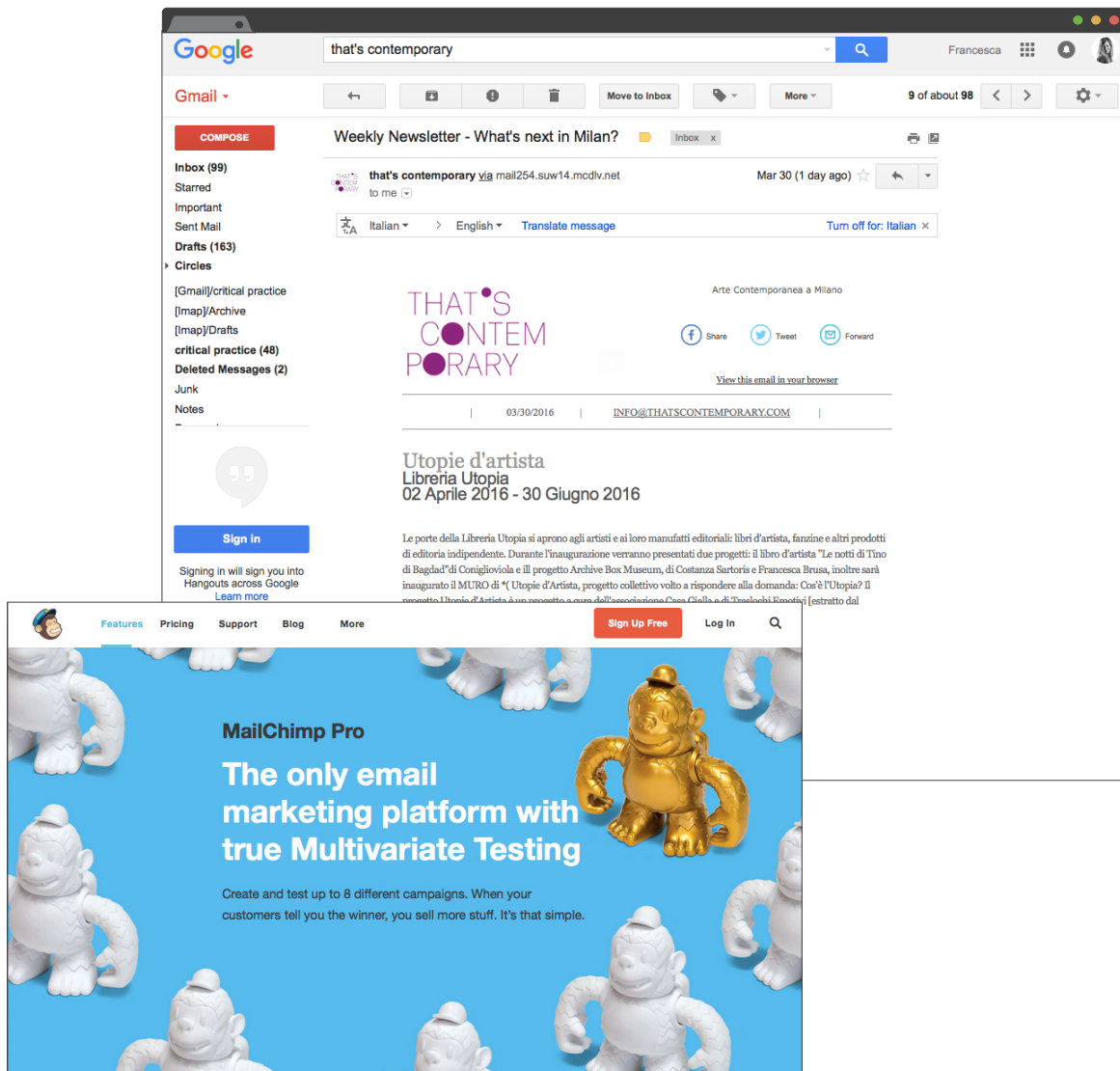
So far I have described how curation in a hybrid exhibitionary space is shared amongst users along a network. How this network is formed and traced will be the focus of this section. I will show how curation is a form of production and, therefore, a use-based economy. Marx has already acknowledged the fact that use, indicated with the term consumption, is a necessary condition of production. He wrote:

Production is [...] at the same time consumption, and consumption is at the same time production. Each is directly its own counterpart. But at the same time an intermediary movement goes on between the two. Production furthers consumption by creating material for the latter which would otherwise lack its object. But consumption in its turn furthers production, by providing for the products the individual for whom they are products. The product receives its last finishing touches in consumption.' (MARX, 1980 [1857-8] IN LIZ MCFALL, 2014)

In his analysis, Marx outlines a process of fusion that occurs between consumption in relation to production and vice versa. Despite having opted to replace the term 'consumption' with 'use', the meaning of 'consumption' in Marx's reading echoes my interpretation of 'use'. This becomes more evident since the lifetime of an exhibitionary space is increasingly *traceable* in use, therefore evidencing the interaction between production and use. Indeed, in the context of exhibitionary spaces, 'use' fosters the on-going production of curatorial activity. As I will show in the following paragraphs, actual use is partially traceable thanks to tools, such as Google Analytics, that collect information on users behaviours. This information, which I will refer to as 'traces', feeds back into the way in which interfaces and their exhibited content are progressively modified.

As Bruno Latour states in 'Beware, your imagination leaves digital traces' (2007), through the *traceability* of user behaviours, what once would have been a private affair between the user and their own exhibitionary experience is now largely open to the view of the producer, 'the scale to draw is not one going from the virtual to the real, but a scale of increasing traceability' (Latour, 2007, p. 2). In this sense, traceability can be utilized as an attempt to move away from the online and offline dichotomy, as Latour suggests, *but* also from the failing effort of delineating a neat separation line between curatorial tasks operated by human curators and those controlled by software processing and assembling data.

As I will discuss in the first and second chapter, traceability might enable us to comprehend how users behave within an interface. Making visible user behaviours and flows will allow curators to understand what an actual hybrid exhibitionary experience might consist of and to be responsive to it when updating the structures and mechanisms of these interfaces. Users' traces might be deployed to better construct the profile of the intended user (which, I will refer to, later on in the introduction with the term 'scripted user') for whom the exhibition is further curated. In other words, traces left by users might feed back into the evolution and curation of interfaces. This can be traced in the lifetime of a newsletter I curate for *that's contemporary*. *What's next in Milan?* is a weekly newsletter that displays a selection of the events and exhibitions that are about to open in Milan. It is created with Mailchimp, which is a marketing service



provider focused on mailing that is able to provide analytics about the ways recipients make use of the visual and textual material they receive. Mailchimp is a freemium service, meaning that offers a basic package for free and that it charges a set of fixed fees according to the additional services that users sign up for. For *that's contemporary* I have setup a plan that we pay monthly through direct debit which allows sending an unlimited number of newsletters and inbox them to a maximum of 6.000 recipients.

Information in the weekly announcement is automatically gathered together by Mailchimp using RSS (Real Simple Syndication) content from thatscontemporary.com¹¹. This newsletter is also setup to be in-boxed on Wednesday to a customized mailing list. Therefore, the same digital tool that contributes to the *production* of the newsletter, it is also in charge of its *circulation* and, consequently, its *user traceability*. For each newsletter sent, Mailchimp emails me a report about the performance of the newsletter. The same information

11 A RSS is a common standard web feed format that users deploy to keep up with websites without having to constantly visit them. When a website is updated with a new blog entry, an audio or a video, the website can notify users with a newsfeed and give the user a link to the new content. Users need a feed reader to utilize RSS. This system is utilized between thatscontemporary.com and Mailchimp. From the admin of thatscontemporary.com, I flag the events and exhibition I want to feature in the newsletter and through RSS they are automatically communicated to Mailchimp that displayed them on the weekly newsletter.

✂ 'The best email, every time. Test different products, buy buttons, subject lines, and other content – up to 8 different variations of a single campaign. Plus, our Intuitive Email Designer makes it easy to create test designs, calls to action, even completely different templates.'

(MAILCHIMP, 2016)

is also stored in *that's contemporary* Mailchimp account. What is provided is a quantitative analysis on how many users open the newsletter, if they use it from a smartphone or a computer, how many times they click on links, which links they click the most, and what contents they share on social media. To put it simply, what Mailchimp does is *tracking* users behaviours and flows and makes them visible to Giulia and I. Even though, this source of information is still underused due to the limited time we can invest on their evaluation, the analysis of these traces has led us to transform the formats and selection of materials in the newsletter in the attempt to make them increasingly more intuitive, customized, sophisticated – in other words,

borrowing a social media terminology, *likeable* ✂.

Now, given that the newsletter is one of the many interfaces through which the hybrid exhibitionary space unfolds, revising an interface – the newsletter – means modifying a whole portion of the exhibition. Therefore, via partitioning my curatorial tasks with Mailchimp of producing and distributing curated newsletters, I have assigned part of the curatorial job to a software. It works, in fact, as a non-human curator as a RSS filters and displays information automatizing the communication between Mailchimp and *thatscontemporary.com*. Also, once the newsletter is inboxed, users will be presented with materials that are *shareable* on social media, therefore they are in communication with other interfaces that will re-curate these materials according to their formats and filters. In this interaction, interfaces curate through communicating amongst each other, and the human curator is merely one node in the exhibitionary network. In this way, I suggest the concept of traceability as a way to reimagine the curatorial delegation occurring between human curators and interfaces in order to reallocate curatorial production between human and non-human actors.

This is connected to the next aspect I want to highlight: beyond the use that I have made of traceability in the curatorial design of digital interfaces, the act of tracing has a second function; it actually works in this thesis as a method for making apparent the decentralization of the curation process, which is spread along a network that is *hybrid* as it is expressed through physical, virtual, social, technological, human and non-human elements. This proposal strongly refers to the decentralization of production, which is a notion that has been discussed by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in *Empire* (2000) they recount how digital networks have modified operations in processes of production, experience and culture. The concept of 'network production' in this text highlights the increasing overlapping of means of production and distribution. They state the following:

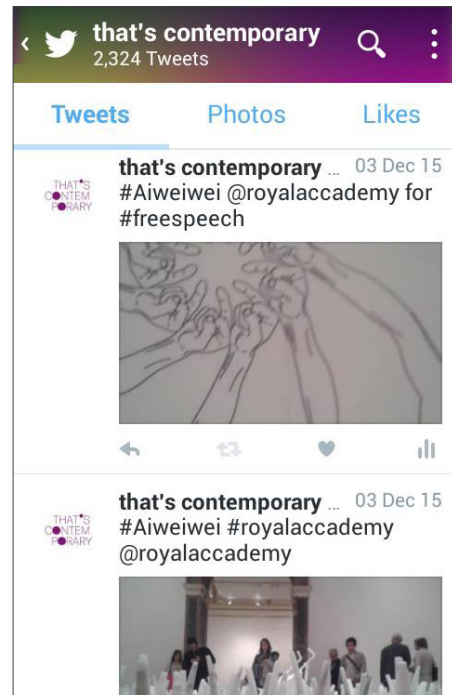
In the passage to the informational economy, the assembly

line has been replaced by the *network* as the organizational model of production, transforming the forms of cooperation and communication within each productive site and among productive sites. [...] Production sites can thus be deterritorialized and tend towards a virtual existence, as coordinates in the communication network. [...] Production now tends to be organized in horizontal network production. (HARDT AND NEGRI, 2000, PP. 294 - 295)

In Hardt and Negri, *network production* refers to a circuit that is dedicated to both production and circulation where 'producing [...] means constructing cooperation and communicative commonalities' (ibid., p. 302). Applying the conception of network production to exhibitionary spaces means starting to take seriously into account the proposition that the exhibition is traceable along a network of cooperation and communication. In this network, sites of use are dislocated and often these sites of use are also sites of production. This can be exemplified by looking back at my account of Ai Weiwei's retrospective. In uploading the photo of Weiwei's artwork on Twitter and assigning a number of hash-tags to it, I have engendered a series of *communicative commonalities* to that image. By using hash-tags I have fixed and connected that image to streams of other images, contextualizing it to other material on the Internet. I have contributed to a network production that is also a form of curation in which users – from different points in the network – produce, curating the network that they inhabit. The result is an exhibition formed from a crowd-sourced exhibitionary network.

I will refer to this configuration with the term *network curation*, borrowing from Hardt and Negri's concept of network production. In this sense, it is essentially the same networked form but that adapts to curation, understood as a specific form of production.

The circulation of the Ai Weiwei's work along this crowd-sourced exhibitionary flow resonates in Lawrence Alloway's visionary text 'Network: The Art World Described as a System' (1972). He envisaged the artwork along multiple modes of exhibitionary existence, which further distributed its effect. In this configuration, the signification of the artwork is not so much placed within a human encounter with an object itself, but contained in its informational network, or in its exhibitionary forms. In this sense, the artwork has a physical existence but also an informational one; it exists as a hybrid form. This decentralization is expressed in Seth Price's *Dispersion* (2002), here the object does not bear witness to its physicality, rather it reproduces itself in a manifold of individual exhibitionary experience via the Internet, magazines and



conversations. Price defines the artwork as an entity that subsists in a ‘circuit of reading’ (Price, 2002). Yet, I would say that such circuit of reading, which coincides with my definition of a hybrid exhibitionary space, unfolds along a network where digital places necessarily iterate with the structures in which art is exhibited in physical settings.

In light of the fact that the exhibition is distributed, what we are progressively more empowered to do is to *trace* the *network curation* from which the exhibition is generated. This means that I will describe the exhibition-making process from its origination to its distribution to use and therefore investigate how the exhibition takes shape into experience. Through acknowledging the curation of the exhibition along its circulation (i.e. its network) I will try to demonstrate that the *network curation* eventually coincides with the exhibition.

CURATING AND THE NETWORK CURATION

Now, I would like to frame the role of myself as curator within this network curation. In doing so, I need to further address a distinction between the ‘network curation’ and the discipline of curating. In general terms, this differentiation is well grasped in a conversation between curators Irit Rogoff and Beatrice von Bismarck that took place at the conference ‘Cultures of the Curatorial’ in Leipzig (Germany) in January 2010. This conversation, titled ‘Curating/Curatorial’, was then published with other essays presented in Leipzig, in a book that took the same name of the conference, *Cultures of the Curatorial* (2012).

Therefore, regarding the distinction between curating and what they termed with the sole adjective ‘the curatorial’, Rogoff stated:

[C]urating [is] a professional practice, which involves a whole set of skills and practices, materials, and institutional and infrastructural conditions. It has everything to do with what goes into the making of exhibitions, or alternatively what we can call ‘platforms of display’ [...] So, if in curating, the emphasis is on the end product [...] in the curatorial, the emphasis is on the trajectory of ongoing, active work, not an isolated end product but a blip along the line of an ongoing project. (ROGOFF, 2010, IN VON BISMARCK AND ROGOFF, 2010, PP. 22-23)

In addition to this definition, von Bismarck expressed her own opinion regarding the discipline of curating and its relationship to ‘the curatorial’. She said:

Curating has to do with [...] techniques, [it] is a constellational activity. [...] By comparison, the curatorial is the dynamic field where the constellational condition comes into being. It is constituted by the curating techniques that comes together as well as by the participants – the actual people involved who



potentially come from different backgrounds, have different agendas and draw on different experiences, knowledges, disciplines. (VON BISMARCK, 2010, IN VON BISMARCK AND ROGOFF, 2010, PP. 24-25)

My reading of how both curators refer to 'the curatorial' is in tandem with my conception of network curation. Despite the fact that Rogoff and von Bismarck do not make any reference to the digitalization and hybridization of 'the curatorial', their description of the curatorial as a trajectory of an ongoing and dynamic field where a contiguous amount of actors and agendas meet, is very relevant to an understanding of curation as a result of decentralized processes of immaterial production unfolding along hybrid networks. Regarding curating, von Bismarck and Rogoff agree that it is a discipline formed by a 'series of techniques' and a 'set of skills' that head to the construction of 'platforms of display', which I have aligned with exhibitionary interfaces. Yet, I would place the discipline of curating in a reciprocal dependency to network curation. In fact, I refer to network curation as a process that *necessarily* encompasses both the discipline of curating and the *work* (i.e. the curatorial) activated by interfaces, the platforms of display in use. This means that, on one hand, I curate interfaces and this occurs thanks to the skills and techniques I employ. On the other hand, it is through the use of these interfaces that the exhibition comes into being.

This thought is also contained within von Bismarck and Rogoff's conversation. Indeed, they agreed that 'the curatorial' is effected by 'the gap' that as Rogoff stated, 'begins to appear between the exhibition's stated aims and its effect in the world' (ibid. p. 23). And, this is reinforced by von Bismarck, who says, 'the gap is something that can come up between the ambition and the actualization of an exhibition' (ibid. p. 25). Accordingly, my understanding

Screenshot of a video interview that *that's contemporary* produced for the exhibition *Focus Group* by artist Francesco Bertocco hosted at Room Galleria in Milan between 31st January and 24th February, 2012. This video interview is part of a broader exploration into exhibition making and the relationships between producers and users that will be explained in the first chapter. This video was directed, filmed and edited by Alessandro Crovi and Claudia Di Lascia with the help of the second camera operator, Luca Simonelli. Giulia Restifo and I led the interview. Francesco Deiana and Andrea Amato curated the graphics and animation of the video. The video is available as digital appendix (n° III b) and on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/40070896>

of network curation also accounts for this 'gap'. The exhibition is actualized between the project conceived by the curator and the project used (and, perhaps, also abused) by its users.

It is important to notice that there are multiple individual uses of the interface that collectively led to its displacement, thus, the *gap* appears. This in fact connects to the reason why instead of using the term 'exhibition' interface I will always attribute (or imply) the term 'exhibitionary' to describe interfaces. This is because, while 'exhibition' would have suggested a motionless setting and a conclusive form of display, 'exhibitionary' stands for a form of mediation that exists in a process of *becoming*¹².

INSCRIBING AND PRESCRIBING THE EXHIBITION

My use of the term 'interface' is embedded within the concept of *script*. I will apply this term to analyze my practice and show how the object of curation – the interface – is subjected to a *curatorial script* and interlaced with the discipline of curating as a way of *scripting* the interface.

The concept of script has traditionally been developed along avenues of film and theatre production, but has been deployed more recently in design-oriented research (Fallan, 2008, Leurs, 2011). So far, it has remained largely underused within the curatorial field. Yet, this approach partly resumes the term 'curatorial design' coined by Vince Dziekan in *Virtuality and the Art of Exhibition: Curatorial Design for the Multimedial Museum* (2012), which merges exhibition design and curatorial practice. Curatorial design indicates a scheme in which curatorial thinking – traditionally reflecting on the proposition of the exhibition – and exhibition design – habitually concerned with the form of the exhibition – are integrated. Dziekan (2012) defines curatorial design as 'an approach [that] involves modelling the desired relationship between the project's thematic and curating methodology adopted at the curatorial level, with strategies being investigated through applied design' (Dziekan, 2012, p. 7). This is also the case in the concept of script I want to develop.

I would like to start from the application of the term 'script' that has been made in the design field, which seems to occur after Madeleine Akrich (1992) and Bruno Latour (Akrich and Latour, 1992) applied the concept of script to the process of *designing* and *describing* artefacts. In Akrich and Latour's 'A summary of a Convenient Vocabulary for the Semiotics of Human and Nonhuman Assemblies' (1992), their concept of the script describes the mediation of actions by an artefact.

12 I have borrowed this term from Tony Bennet's essay 'The Exhibitionary Complex' which is contained in his book *The Birth of the Museum* (1995). The essay discloses a Foucauldian understanding of the formation of the museum as an apparatus of disciplinary power and the nation state. In his reading, the exhibitionary complex refers to a set of practices of representation that were shared in the work of nineteenth-century public exhibitionary institutions: museums of all disciplines from history, art, to natural sciences, but also expositions, arcades and department stores were included in this description. Even though Bennet's take on the museum is characterized by the institution's hegemony upon users (an approach that has been now replaced by a more dialectical attitude between two parties), these practices of representation released a public space and at the same time, modes of classification for users to inhabit these spaces. In this way, the term 'exhibitionary' seems to suggest the cumulative users' modes of inhabiting these spaces.

An artefact is, by definition, an object that is created by human intervention. For the authors, more specifically, an artefact is a script – which is also conceived by human beings – that takes a form. Such a form, which is the way the artefact materializes to its users, is designed to enable a user to carry out a program of actions when using the artefact, ‘like a film, [an artefact] defines a framework of actions together with the actors and the space in which they are supposed to act’ (Akrich, 1992, p. 203). In the same text, more specifically, she metaphorically explains the *script* as being a type of ‘instruction manual’ that is *inscribed* in an artefact to designate its use and scope as established by its producer(s). Akrich writes that, ‘[a] large part of the work of innovators is that of “inscribing” this vision of (or prediction about) the world in the technical content of the new object’ (Akrich, 1992, p. 208). She names the end product of this work a ‘script’ or a ‘scenario’. In my work, I will refer to it with the term ‘script’. In line with this, Latour follows up Akrich’s argument and explains that *prescription* is the behavior imposed back onto the users by the vision inscribed in the artefact (Latour, 1992, p. 225–258). Consequently, producing a script is about creating a program of actions that is prescribed to users when using that artefact. For Akrich and Latour, inscribing and prescribing are therefore the two key techniques when designing an artefact.

As a matter of fact, interfaces are artefacts that mediate a program of actions. Therefore, the program of actions will be *prescribed* to users through being *inscribed* in the structure of the interface. When conceiving the interface of *that’s contemporary*, I started by trying to *predict* a scenario and imagine possible users’ and set of behaviors and flows. In doing so, I had to establish the potential reasons why users would actually *use* this platform and what I wanted them to experience when navigating it. As I will more specifically discuss in the first chapter, the script was constructed using a matrix that allowed reflection on, for example, the role that the interface would play in the life of users and how they would operate within the interface. In doing so, it was necessary for the script to create a *scripted user* – the ‘model user’ (Eco, 1989) for whom the interface is designed for – that was capable of actualising the various prescriptions we had predicted for actual users¹³. The scripted user is a combination of possible characters, each with a series of specific competences, motivations, aspirations and tastes. It is by following these attributes that, in the construction of *that’s contemporary.com*, we could make hypotheses of how certain users would act and re-act in response to certain designs, forms, images, content and language. Yet, this perspective can be reversed: rather than considering the scripted user merely as a congregation of characteristics that the interface has to please, the scripted user is about ‘making users’, an expression that I understand as the ways users can be directed to actually

13 The concept of scripted users draws on Umberto Eco’s notion of the model reader addressed in his theory of textual cooperation in *The Open Work* (1989). In his work, the reader adopts a key role in the process of the meaning-making of the text. Eco describes the model reader as the one who is able to actualize the various meanings found in a text and, in this way, decode all the possible semiosis of the narrative. For this reason, the text is always incomplete without the reader’s input.

experience the exhibition. If an exhibitionary script is able to address different type of actual users, it is actually allowing for different exhibitionary experiences to be produced within the same exhibitionary script. Simon Sheikh in 'Constitutive Effects: the Techniques of the Curator' (2007) writes in this regard that, 'it is the mode of address that produces a public, and if one tries to imagine different publics, different notions of stranger relationality, one must also (re)consider the mode of address' (Sheikh, 2007, p. 182).

✎ An exhibition must imagine a public in order to produce it, and to produce a world around it – a horizon. (SIMON SHEIKH, 2007, P. 182)

DE-SCRIBING¹⁴ THE EXHIBITION

Describing is the third operation that completes the conceptualization by Akrich and Latour's (1992) script, which I will apply to the practice of curating an exhibition.

As stated above, Akrich and Latour view the construction of an artefact as occurring through the operations of inscribing and prescribing. Description is, for the authors, the reverse process of the other two operations: it indicates the ways, in which the process of inscription and prescription of artefacts can be deconstructed. They write, '[t]he aim of an academic written analysis of a setting [enabled by an artefact] is to put on paper the text of what the various actors in the setting are doing to one another, the de-description, usually, by the analyst, is the opposite movement of the in-scripture' (Akrich and Latour, 1992, p. 259). Here, the pun 'de-description' serves to highlight the reversal that the prefix 'de' implies and, in this way, the backwards movement of the operation of describing in respect to the other two. Therefore, I will employ description as a method for grasping and dissecting the network of actors that are involved in the *displacement* of the script found in interfaces that are in use. Such displacement – which is what Akrich and Latour call 'the setting' – is the result of the negotiations between the author of the script and its users occurring during use. As Akrich writes in 'The De-Description of Technical Objects' (1992):

[It] may be that no actors will come forward to play the roles envisaged by the designer. Or users may define quite different roles of their own. [...] we have to go back and forth continually between the designer and the user, between the designer's projected user and the real user, between the world inscribed in the object and the world described by its displacement. For it is in this incessant variation that we obtain access to the crucial relationships: the use's reactions that give body to the designer's project, and the way in which user's real environment is in part specified by the introduction of a new piece of equipment.

(AKRICH, 1992, P. 208-209)

14

The word 'describing' shares with the other two curating operations of 'inscribing' and 'prescribing', the same Latin root that is the verb 'scribere', which translates in English as 'to write' and that was used as a noun with the word *scriptum* from which the word 'script' derives (Oxford Dictionary, 2016).

In these terms, the description of exhibitionary interfaces encompasses not only the *inscribed* and *prescribed script* but also an account of the use of interfaces, which will be formed thanks to the use of tools tracking the flows and behaviors of users, expressing that ‘gap’ that persists, ‘between the exhibition’s stated aims and its effect in the world’ (Rogoff, 2010 in von Bismarck and Rogoff, 2010, p. 23). In this logic, an account of the traceability of users becomes a vivid part of the way interfaces in this thesis are narrated. The interfaces will be *de-scribed* or, put in other words, they will be the narrator’s displacement of a process of *inscription*, *prescription* and *actual use*. What is at stake in describing is to exhibit the network curation of the exhibitionary space that unfolds via connected interfaces.

This understanding of description is inspired by Actor Network Theory (ANT), which is a method that uses *networks* to understand complex systems. The suitability of this term becomes even more apparent on reading Latour’s definition of an actor-network as, ‘a method to describe the deployment of associations like semiotics is a method to describe the generative path of any narration’ (Latour, 1996, p. 9). Therefore, this research understands descriptions as the transpositions of actor-networks. My understanding of actor-network is informed by the work of Bruno Latour (1995; 1996; 2004; 2005; 2012), John Law (1992), Michel Callon (1991; 2010; Callon and Latour, 1981), Madeleine Akrich (1992; Akrich and Latour, 1992), Yaneva Albena (2003) and von Bismarck (2010). Even though, sometimes ANT seems to ask for an impossible achievement – which is to create academic texts by just describing, avoiding additional explanations (Latour, 2004) – I have found ANT a valuable tool within the analysis of the exhibition-forming processes.

During my earlier studies in Communication and Informational Technologies, I utilized the concept ‘network’ as a technical network (where the Internet is just one example) or a way to associate human actors. Specifically, my interest in networks originally comes from the work of Manuel Castells (1996, 2009) where ‘the social’ and ‘technological’ blur in the conception of ‘network society’. In Castells, the complex relationships that emerge in the interaction between social action and information technologies are analysed as socio-technical networks. This approach has been extremely useful for understanding the structural formation of the network. In *Communication Power* (2009), Castells explains:

A network is a set of interconnected nodes. [...] Any component of a network is a node and its function and meaning depend on the programs of the network and on its interaction with other nodes in the network. Nodes increase their importance for the network by absorbing more relevant information, and processing it more efficiently. The relative importance of a node [...] stems from its ability to contribute to the network’s effectiveness in achieving its goals, as defined by the values and

interests programed into the networks. However, all nodes of a network are necessary for the network's performance [...] When nodes become unnecessary for the fulfilment of the networks' goals, networks tend to reconfigure themselves, deleting some nodes, and adding new ones. Nodes only exist and function as components of networks. (CASTELLS, 2009, PP. 19 - 20)

As I will describe in the first chapter, the configurations and mechanisms of Castells' networks are still very relevant for understanding the relation between exhibitionary networks and their constitutive nodes in this thesis. However, with the introduction of ANT to my research, I incorporated an additional perspective on the topic.

One of the main differences between ANT and Castells' networks is that ANT, 'does not say anything about the shape of entities and actions' (Latour, 1996, p. 9). An actor-network is, in fact, a method for describing something, rather than understanding it as existing as a ready-made form (Latour, 2005). Therefore, what is outlined in an actor-network may not always take the shape of a network. This differs from Castells' theory in which socio-technical networks are actually the concrete shape of the subject of his research. Yet, my thesis incorporates both views because, even though my method – ANT – does not necessarily portray a network-based system, the aim of tracing will be to actually describe a network curation. My thesis develops in this semi-paradox: on one side, via using ANT, I suggest that the exhibition is made visible through the description of a network, a description that does not try to say anything about the form of the exhibition. On the other side, what I actually describe is a horizontal and decentralized structure of production that is the network curation forming the exhibition. Therefore, it is key to understand that while the network curation is the object of this thesis, the actor-network is the method that I use to account for it. The actor-network is, in fact, the description, held in the text of this thesis.

The deployment in this research of both ANT and Castells' understanding of networks (that is also aligned with Hardt and Negri's notion of network production from which network curation stems) results in the overlap of some terminologies. For example, while Castells speaks of 'nodes', Latour speaks of 'actors'. Castells constructs his concept of 'nodes' taking from information theory but expands that nodes can be more than a mere technological understanding. In his view, nodes might have different scales and topologies. In the *The rise of the network society* (1996), he writes:

They are stock exchange markets, and their ancillary service centers in the network of global financial flows. They are national councils of ministers and European Commissioners in the political network that governs the European Union. They are coca fields

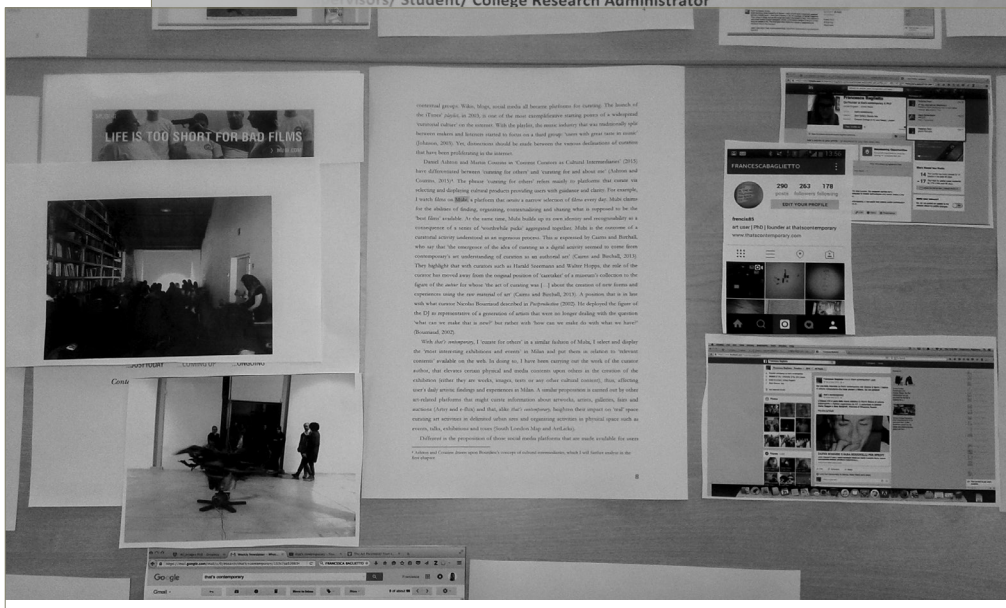
and poppy fields, clandestine laboratories, secret landing strips, street gangs, and money-laundering financial institutions in the network of drug traffic that penetrates economies, societies, and states throughout the world. They are television systems, entertainment studios, computer graphics milieux, news teams, and mobile devices generating, transmitting, and receiving signals in the global network of the new media the roots of cultural expression and public opinion. (CASTELLS, 1996, P. 501)

The same broad vision of what a node, or an actor, might be is taken by ANT. In ANT, anything can be an actor; this is because actor-networks may be used to describe everything. Actors are the ‘performers’ of descriptions. What matters in an actor-network is that any actor included must have an agency: actors are a source of actions – whether they are human or non-human. As Latour says, in an actor-network, ‘each participant is treated as a full-blown mediator’ (Latour, 2005, p. 128). This will be useful when, in the first chapter for example, I will ascribe a curatorial agency to software and algorithms contributing to the unfolding of the network curation. In this thesis, even though nodes directly refer to the objects of the research and actors to the ‘performers’ of the description, they essentially undertake the same role.

In *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory* (2005), Latour writes, ‘a good actor-network theory account is a narrative or a description or a proposition’ (Latour, 2005, p. 128). In this definition, an actor-network coincides with both a narrative account and a descriptive account, and implies in either case a degree of action between actors. Besides, the relational contexts in which actors operate are the arena for the process of *translation*, which is about establishing convergences and homologies between various entities and aspects that were previously unconnected (Latour, 2005). In ANT, translation is, in fact, the operation of creating actor-networks. It designates the curator’s agency – my agency – in writing this thesis and, in turn, describing *that’s contemporary’s* interfaces via creating certain relations amongst actors. In this regards, Michel Callon writes that ‘[a]ll the entities and all the relationships between these entities should be described. [...] Translation is triangular: it involves a translator, something that is translated, and a medium in which that translation is inscribed’ (Callon, 1991, p. 143). This triangular formation is, in this case, given by myself in the role of the curator/translator, the network curation as the ‘thing’ to be translated, and this thesis, which functions as the medium in which I inscribe my translations. In addition, Latour says that, ‘a good text elicits a network of actors when it allows the writer to trace a set of relations defined as so many translations’ (Latour, 2005, p. 129). I understand this to mean that my task as a curator/translator in this thesis is to follow the progression of actors’ activities and to perform as many translations as possible, which is not about increasing the complexity of the researched object, but rather

INTRODUCTION

Camb	Chel	CSM	LCF	WCA	LCC
RESEARCH DEGREES SUPERVISION RECORD SHEET					
Student Name: Francesca Brylletto		Supervisor(s): Neil Cummings Linda Sandino		Date: 03-02 2014	
Registration: Probationary/ Confirmed		Start Time: 10.00 am	Finish Time: 11.45	Date of next Tutorial: thurs. 17.03.14	
Issues Discussed: Supervisor(s) to complete: (Please refer to previous tutorials as appropriate)			Action Plan: Student to complete:		
<p>Linda has joined the team so we spend 15 mins catching up with where we are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 35,000 words are what we are aiming for - We discuss the structure, the three sections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① the platform // Exhibitionary Space. ② the app // narrative environments ③ Art Pacemaker // hybrid space. <p>Time // Space.</p> <p>We discuss the difference between using - space // environment.</p> <p>We discuss monetising users → decision trees. → curating users experience → selling data.</p> <p>Usability - engaging "curating" users experience, experience design -</p>			<p>① to send bibliography to Linda</p> <p>② to send revised text to Linda + Neil.</p> <p>Hybrid Space Art Pacemaker</p>		
Signature: Neil Cummings			Student Signature:		
Supervisors/ Student/ College Research Administrator					



increasing the number and types of actors of this thesis, such that their relations and agencies become known to the reader. A proposition that is expressed by Latour, who says, ‘instead of simply transporting effects without transforming them, each of these points in the text may become a bifurcation, an event, or the origin of a new translation. As soon as actors are treated not as intermediaries but as mediators, they render the movement of the social visible to the reader’ (Latour, 2005, p. 128). According to ANT, an intermediary is, in fact, an actor that transports an intention or a meaning without operating any transformation to the network. Defining the input of an intermediary is enough to also define its output. Intermediaries are put in opposition to mediators, which are actors that transform – or translate – the intention or the meaning that they carry along a network. In this set of thoughts, the quality of the progression of my thesis can be determined by my ability to unfold actor-networks, which can be assessed by my capacity to treat as many actors as possible as mediators rather than intermediaries.

In this configuration, I play two roles in one: being the curator/translator of this thesis, I am also one of the users/actors that through re-performing *that’s contemporary* in the thesis is manipulating the exhibitionary script – which did not initially predict its own displacement in the thesis.

The reason for using ANT in this thesis is because I have found that the exhibitionary spaces in which I was operating (while creating them) were becoming increasingly dispersed and I hoped that ANT would give me a tool to describe this dispersion. ANT will enable me to grasp all the operations that, even though they are the cornerstones of an exhibition, usually recede and dissolve into the background. This is why evidence of my accomplished exhibitionary spaces (such as screenshots, video captures, Google and Facebook Analytics), as well as unrealized proposals and solved and unsolved issues (which are discussed in the text and displayed in the form of emails, whatsapp conversations, sketches and legal documents) that have been left behind by these activities, will be gleaned from the background and exposed together in order to re-perform the exhibition within the account that this text offers. Besides, the actor-networks I will unfold will be aimed to let readers actualize the various meanings that the exhibition of this thesis encapsulates.

In these terms, this thesis aims to function as an interface itself (with the table of contents as a kind of script) mediating an account of my practice between myself, the curator and translator of this thesis and you, the user of the interface.

LOCATING MY RESEARCH

Stating the research questions

This thesis responds to two research questions: 'Does the exhibition exist along the network of its production (or network production)?' and 'What are the actors (or nodes) included in this network?' Before outlining answers in response to these two lines of enquiry, I would like to clarify their precise meaning.

As discussed beforehand, 'network production' refers to Hardt and Negri's (2000) theory of the same name. In this introduction, I have borrowed and transformed this concept into the idea of *network curation*, in which curation has as a particular form of production consisting of multiple users distributed across networks of interfaces who produce new content by collectively curating them. In this sense, the first question could also be stated as follows: 'does the exhibition exist along a network curation?' In order to respond to this query, the thesis demonstrates that the exhibition is not enclosed in the 'here and now' of its physical setting, rather the exhibition expands through the interactions with its users across multiple interfaces. The exhibition coincides, therefore, with its network curation.

This coincidence between the exhibition and its network curation suggests that the exhibition is distributed across a number of actors or nodes. The real challenge of this research is, in this sense, embraced within the second question, 'what are the actors (or nodes) included in this network?' This question is, in fact, methodological, and serves to respond to the first one. In order to demonstrate that the exhibition exists along its network curation, the task of the thesis is to employ Actor Network Theory, in order to identify and *translate* the actors (or nodes) forming this network.

My contribution to knowledge

By responding to the research questions stated above, my contribution to knowledge in the field of curatorial studies and practice can be identified as three interconnected aspects:

Firstly, I propose original ways to apply Actor Network Theory (ANT) to trace the unfolding of exhibitions. Beatrice von Bismark (2010) and Yaneva Albena (2003) have already applied ANT to portray curatorial processes and exhibition making. However, in their actor networks they describe interactions happening solely in physical spaces. In a different way, I use ANT to demonstrate how exhibitions unfold along interactions that occur between physical and digital spaces and that are mediated by multiple interfaces.

The first proposition leads to the second, as the actor networks of this thesis trace what I refer to as hybrid exhibitionary spaces. The concept of hybrid exhibitionary space is developed within a unique interdisciplinary arena that combines curatorial and spatial theory. The area of curatorial studies includes the debate on the relationship between curating and the 'curatorial' (von Bismark and Rogoff, 2010), which explores exchanges between producers and the public.

The spatial theories I investigate understand space as a social entity (Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 2005), constructed by multiple interactions occurring between physical and digital spaces (Kennedy, 2012) that give rise to what is called hybrid space (Kluitenberg, 2006; de Souza and Silvia, 2006; Jordan, 2009; de Souza and Silvia and Frith, 2012).

Thirdly, I draw upon the concept of the script as addressed by Bruno Latour (1992) and Madeleine Akrich (1992). In doing so, my thesis proposes a new set of terms (such as describing, inscribing and prescribing) for discussing curatorial practice and exhibition making in the context of omnipresent digital reality.

Exhibition as research

The use of Actor Network Theory as a methodology for my research leads to another aspect, which is how the thesis itself becomes a way of exhibiting research while addressing it. As I have already stated, by writing up the thesis, I re-perform the exhibition's network curation. The network curation traced in the thesis is actually a re-curation of the same exhibitionary space that is described within the body of the text. To this end, the thesis can be comprehended as an exhibitionary interface and a curatorial endeavor.

Choosing the relevant actors and establishing their relations are activities found in my curatorial practice with *that's contemporary*. While, at the same time, selecting, outlining and responding to this in the thesis becomes a way of curating my own practice within the text. Following Simon Sheikh's argument developed in 'Towards the Exhibition as Research' (2015), curating is thus understood as a form of research and the thesis-as-exhibition is the arena where this research is addressed while being exhibited.

Stating the limits of my research

The theoretical framework constructed in this thesis is shaped by my practice as a co-founder and curator of *that's contemporary*. The challenge of this research is to *exhibit* a series of exhibitionary spaces while understanding both exhibited objects and the activity of exhibiting through theoretical concepts. However, in order to keep focus on my own curatorial practice, this piece of writing holds the research in a non-exhaustive landscape of theoretical references and possibilities, which I chose not to follow.

The thesis does not take an historical approach, neither does it trace the evolution of digitally-informed artistic practices, nor does it discuss in detail the emergence of online digital curating and it does not try to offer a comprehensive panorama of current experimental online curatorial practice. Concepts such as 'script' and 'network', but also issues related to elements like 'algorithms' and 'codes' are not explored thoroughly. For example, the 'script' is developed upon ANT (Latour, 1992; Akrich and Latour, 1992) and design thinking (Leurs, 2011) but there are other relevant paradigms that deal with the idea of script in its digital connotations (Cox and McLean, 2012), which, again,

are not explored here. The focus of this research was unable to extend to related concepts that more extensive piece of research, or other methodologies, could have included. In accordance to ANT, this thesis attempts to avoid redundant explanations. It deploys solely the theories that serve to describe and re-enact my own curatorial practice while writing up the thesis. This criteria leads the theoretical framework to reflect a time in which online curation is already embedded and naturalized by 'ordinary' users within their daily life. I construct a curatorial paradigm around the concept of interface (Manovich, 2011) and users (Wright, 2013). Then, by drawing upon Joasia Krysa's work (2013), the thesis explores what it may mean to curate systems and user interactions across interfaces (Bolter and Grusin, 1999). I refer to different perspectives on forms of engagement to 'physical' exhibitions as explored by curators such as, amongst others, Anthony Huberman (2011), Beatrice von Bismark (2010), Simon Sheikh (2007) and Jörn Schafaff (2010; 2014). I weave these references with reflections on various forms of digital curating as addressed by authors such as Joasia Krysa (2013), Omar Kholeif (2014), Loney Abrams (2013) and Caitlin Jones (2012).

Relevant examples of curatorial practice

In the first chapter, I discuss the platform *thatstemporary.com* from two curatorial perspectives – as a way to 'curate for others' and for users to 'curate for and about themselves' (Ashton and Couzins, 2015). Drawing upon these two forms of curating, *thatstemporary.com* is comparable to other online platforms that curate the experience of art in cities by organizing information about art events and exhibitions such as Art Rabbit, South London Map or Art Licks. *thatstemporary.com* embraces the ambitions of the work carried out by online platforms indexing artworks at a very large scale such as Art Stack and Artsy. It also attempts to provide a critical point of view, which is inspired by older online platforms such as e-flux. The curatorial work is compared to platforms that operate outside of the contemporary art world such as Mubi. Such platforms were useful to understand diverse curatorial models and the ways these different approaches can generate financial resources.

The curatorial agenda is informed, in the second chapter, by insights around the rise of mobile technologies (Russell, 1999; McGarrigle, 2012; de Souza e Silva and Frith, 2012) in a period in which portable smart devices and applications were in a process of quick commercialization. The experimental locative practices of the beginning of the 2000s are mentioned in the thesis (Tuters and Varnelis, 2006; Bleecker and Knowlton, 2006) but attention rapidly moves to geo-locative apps developed in the last seven years such as Highlights, Gowalla and Foursquare.

Both the second and third chapters show how through the use in mobility of the most common social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, physical exhibitions expand beyond their physical setting and circulate across hybrid networks.

CHAPTER ONE

THAT'S CONTEMPORARY – SCRIPTING THE INTERFACE AND BEYOND

46

CHAPTER OVERVIEW — This chapter will focus on the development of the first self-conscious interface I created, the web platform thatscontemporary.com. In doing so, I will contextualize the foundation of *that's contemporary* within the political context of Milan focusing on a time frame between 2011 and 2014. The intention of doing so is to identify some of the external conditions that explain the construction of the platform as a new hybrid exhibitionary space for contemporary art in Milan. I will then move on to present the exhibitionary script upon which the platform is grounded.

The title of this chapter – ‘scripting the interface and beyond’ – deploys the verb ‘scripting’ to synthesize the triad inscribe-

prescribe-describe, embracing the various ways of manipulation of a script. I have borrowed the term from Bas Leurs' lecture, titled 'Design Scripts: Designing (Inter)actions With Intent' (2011), where the concept of scripting designates the operation of designing scripts.

Through addressing the agency of the script, I will describe the functioning of the interface and its constitutive parts via the displacement of its hybrid exhibitionary networks and provide an interpretation of such mechanisms using Actor Network Theory. The idea at the foundation of this section is that the description of the mediation by an interface is possible through the transposition of networks that exist between the exhibited material and its activation by users.

After the description of *that'scontemporary.com*, according to my script, I will trace what I referred to in the introduction as 'the gap' or 'the exhibitionary' by performing a fictional user, Ann, as she inhabits the platform. I have created Ann as a result of the scripted user combined with the information gathered from the accumulation of *usages* performed by actual users of the platform, which have been tracked by Google Analytics. In this way, Ann will function as a network in an actor, an actor-network. Specifically, Ann is a network of evidence 'translated' by me, who operates in the role of the translator of this thesis.

I will then focus on the exhibitionary sections *Channel* and *Hideout* that I have conceived with Giulia after the first release of the platform and that functioned as a way to challenge the roles and structures of the initial exhibitionary script. I will reveal the thoughts behind the modes through which we have curated visual and textual materials in these spaces and show how my

idea of expanded exhibitionary space meets the concept of post-studio practice addressed from the seventies until now. I will then move on and show how *that's contemporary* has expanded beyond thatscontemporary.com, along a *network of interfaces* from social media, to blogs and online magazines. Regarding this, it is worthwhile noting that I will specifically refer to the platform using the web address thatscontemporary.com. Differently, I will speak of *that's contemporary* when referring to the non-profit organization, that is the legal structure under which I have collaboratively developed this long-term curatorial project encompassing different disciplines and skills. Therefore, contrastingly to thatscontemporary.com, which counts for one interface, *that's contemporary* exists along a network of interfaces, which also contains thatscontemporary.com.

Finally, I intend to illustrate how these hybrid exhibitionary frameworks curate, and are curated by, extensive networks of values that interlace and legitimize what is exhibited. I will attempt to show that, on the one hand, *that's contemporary's* validation was made by a series of indicators of legitimacy – which are provided by the reputation of the art places constituting the network – and that, on the other hand, this multiplicity of indicators turned the platform itself in an indicator of legitimacy for its partaking art places.

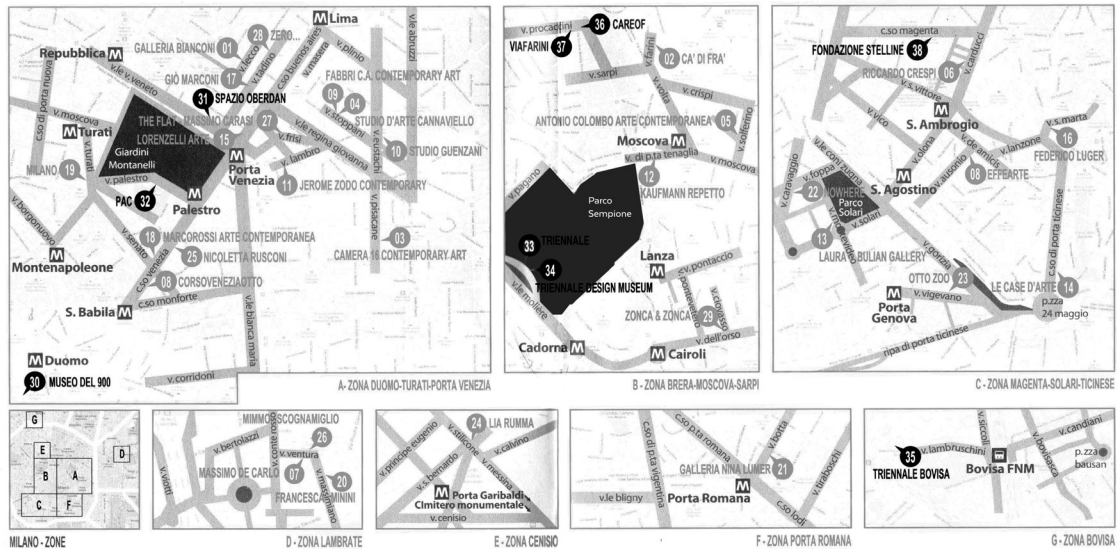


MILAN

At the end of 2010, I was returned to Milan from an exchange program at San Diego State University in California where I studied curatorial practice, exhibition design and contemporary art history. I was in the last stages of an MA on cultural management at IULM University in Milan with a fresh perspective of the city and its cultural activity after spending time in the US. I was writing a thesis exploring the rise of new aesthetics in the ‘network society’, showing how digital networking technologies were increasingly impacting on the creative work of a number of artists and curators. In the same period, my university colleague and friend, Giulia Restifo, was in Australia researching creative clusters and cultural districts using Melbourne as a case study. Between November 2010 and March 2011, while applying for this PhD, Giulia and I regularly had a series of informal Skype conversations in which we compared some of the practices that she was investigating in Australia with those I could detect in Milan. Giulia’s perception was that in Melbourne there was a wide range of paper maps, web and mobile platforms – interfaces – as well as organized tours and streets signs with which she could effortlessly arrange visits and orient herself amongst galleries, non-profits and museums. In Milan, in 2011, I realized that finding art places was not so easy. These art places were dislocated all around the city – from the center to more peripheral areas that are often not very well served by Milan’s transport network. What I perceived was a lack of city cultural planning¹. There was not

Party in Piazza Affari in Milan organized by the counsellor Stefano Boeri, on the 25th September 2012. The picture portrays Maurizio Cattelan’s site-specific artwork, L.O.V.E. (2010), which stands in the middle of the square in front of the Stock Exchange building.

¹ This deduction was also confirmed by an online questionnaire that Giulia and I built and launched with Google Form in June 2011. The results highlighted that most of the sample thought that information available about contemporary art in Milan was not satisfactory, that such information was often difficult to find and sometimes unclear and/or poorly sorted. This research was not carried out as a part of this PhD, as it took place prior to the start of the research. Still, the encounter between the forthcoming platform and potential users left us with a series of hints, which contributed to developing the curatorial agency of the platform. The questionnaire was distributed by sending a direct link to the questions on Google Form via e-mails



Start Milano's map – Issue 18 (September – November 2010). The map highlights urban areas with the densest aggregation of commercial galleries and art institutions.

yet a real attempt to connect these places and trigger public participation in the art field. *Start Milano*, a non-profit organization directed by gallerist Pasquale Leccese, was an exception to this rule. Founded in 2005 from a group of

sixteen commercial galleries, *Start Milano* instituted a network amongst galleries in the city. In September every year, *Start Milano* organized an 'art weekend' with the scope to drive media and public attention to the contemporary art scene. All associated galleries were asked to celebrate together the new seasonal exhibition program with coordinated private views, collaborative events, performances and screenings. A three-month paper map was also distributed by affiliated commercial galleries and public art institutions and was available on a dedicated website. Taking part in *Start Milano* required: firstly, having two years of experience as a commercial gallery; secondly, the ability to provide two recommendation letters by affiliated galleries and thirdly the payment of an annual fee of €700 (Pirrelli, 2010). In 2010, *Start Milano* had grown to forty-one gallery associates (ibid.) grouping together both prominent and middle-sized commercial galleries. Even though the entry criteria was quite loose, these requirements meant that *Start Milano* was inevitably divorced from a large section of artistic and curatorial practices proposed by temporary clusters or young art spaces both commercial and non-profit.

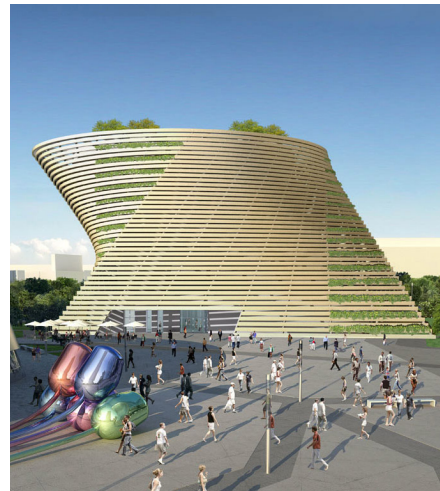
Our diagnosis of the city, therefore, was that there was a lack of a widespread network for the local art field and an absence of a curatorial tool effectively mediating between contemporary artistic activities and their (potential) users. Giulia and I started to consider how to create such a curatorial tool and thought that the construction of a web platform featuring an interactive map could offer more potential for such mediation, which I will discuss this in the next

and Facebook chats to individuals between 24 - 38 years old involved in the arts or who we knew had an interest in the arts. Due to scarce resources, the questionnaire only reached individuals within friendship groups or acquaintances, eventually reaching a total of 102 respondents. Despite only circulating within a restricted network, the sample represented the demographic we were interested in, with 27% art lovers, 26% art students, 11% art professionals, 9% students in other creative disciplines.

section. We also wanted an interface that could be more inclusive, so that membership would not be dependent on a limiting set of criteria or financial means but on our own curatorial choices and I will further explain in this chapter the curatorial process of selection, evidencing the elusiveness of its criteria. At the beginning, the relatively low-cost maintenance of updating a web platform – compared with the cost of regularly printing and distributing paper maps – encouraged us to be independent from fee-set plans. Yet, this initial judgement grew in complexity but I will explore this aspect at the end of this chapter.

In the same period, I was confronted with a situation in which the problems and potentialities of the city were largely discussed through numerous political debates preceding the upcoming mayoral election on 28th and 29th May, 2011. During the election period, the most likely contenders presented two different political proposals on the allocation of resources within the cultural sector. On one side, the candidate in office Letizia Moratti, running for Silvio Berlusconi's party Il Popolo della Libertà (Pdl) seeking re-election, presented a new project for a contemporary art museum in Milan, named Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Milano (MAC). Moratti was drawing on the city's twenty-year long aspiration for a museum of contemporary art; a venture that commenced with the Mayor Gabriele Albertini, who imagined a museum dedicated to the 'present', Museo del Presente, as part of a gentrification plan for the former industrial area Bovisa (Offeddu and Sansa, 2007). The project was blocked for many years and, later, completely abandoned to be re-branded and re-launched in time for the conclusion of the 2011 election (Bosco, 2011; Biraghi, 2011). On the other side of the rivalry, Giuliano Pisapia's political project was endorsed by a large left-wing coalition where the construction of a new museum would not be contemplated and would instead be replaced by a project to reevaluate the existing cultural art spaces and institutions in Milan. Pisapia's campaign in the end proved to eventually be the most popular proposal and he won on the 30th May, with 55% of the votes (Corriere della Sera, 2011; Repubblica, 2011).

Straight after the election, the new administration led by the Mayor and the new Counsellor for Culture and Design, the architect, urban and geopolitical theorist, Stefano Boeri impeded the construction of MAC as a result of analysis that assessed the museum as too costly, not only to build but above all to run (Flash Art, 2011; Artribune, 2013). Nonetheless, during their first year of mandate, the new administration rethought a project for a type of contemporary museum in Milan and in Spring 2012, the idea of an expensive *centralized museum* was



The layout of the unrealized project for the Museum for Contemporary Art in Milan (MAC) by the architect Daniel Libeskind.



The speech by Giuliano Pisapia, the new Mayor of Milan in Piazza on the first-day of his mandate as Mayor of Milan on the 1st June, 2011.



A musician playing piano on a public tram during the music festival, Piano City, in 2012.

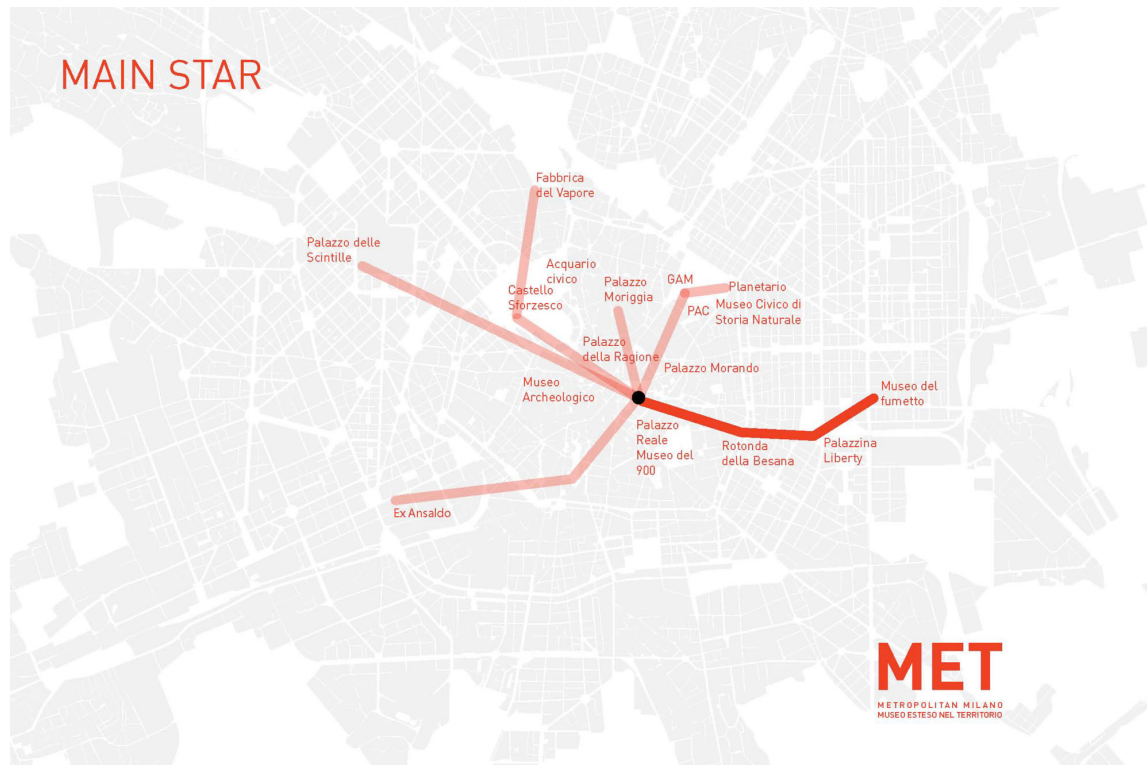
replaced by the project for a *distributed museum* – called MET, an acronym of Museo Esteso sul Territorio, which translates in English as Territorially Extended Museum. Boeri's proposal was about to invest municipal resources in the activation of a cultural network spread across a geographically extended urban area. The MET project was designed as a culturally-led local development where an idiosyncratic configuration of top-down planned actions would be mixed with emergent and self-organized activities by a multiplicity of cultural spaces². Concrete illustrations that demonstrate ways in which this policy was applied are observable in some cultural events that Boeri accomplished during his term and that functioned as preparatory to the creation of the extended museum. For example, *Piano City* (2012–) is a music festival with piano concerts distributed not only notorious venues, but also in small libraries, public

transports, apartments, terraces and courtyards. Pianists – from professionals, to students and amateurs – were crowdsourced through an online open call, which they applied for by uploading a video on the event's website. In this example, resources and skills already existing in the city were gathered together and powered by initiatives delivered by the municipality. Boeri presented MET at the Symposium, 'Milan: The Contemporary Future'³ organized by The Art, Science and Knowledge Centre (ASK) at Bocconi University in Milan. The counsellor's political manifesto aimed for a fairer repartition of public investment amongst art spaces and cultural initiatives, as opposed to the former project for a single dominant museum that would have exhausted the majority of financial and human resources that the municipality could have allocated to culture. MET's main objectives were, firstly, the re-evaluation of the individual identity of each public cultural space (from public galleries, museums and pavilions, to historical buildings, to local libraries, to urban farmsteads, for instance) through the construction of a renewed cultural program. The second objective was to create and promote cultural routes amongst art spaces and districts – to coincide with the emergence of the extended museum – through the enhancement of public transport and the construction of new cycle lanes and pedestrian routes. In his visual schema, Boeri's extended museum was organized and presented around the image of a series of 'urban constellations', revealing a map of spaces functioning as points of connection for a series of directory lines where a central fulcrum would be Milan's principal cathedral, the Duomo. From here they would expand out far from the city centre, connecting up with cultural spaces

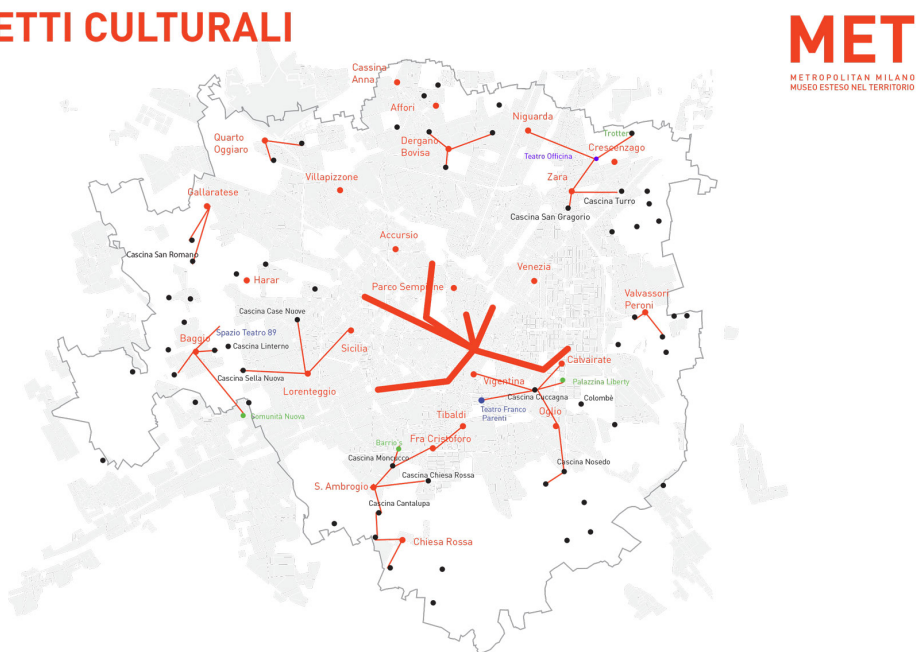
2 The synergy of public investment with independent initiatives is considered a valuable drive of local development. For further analysis on the subject on cultural districts see: 'Culture as an Engine of Local Development Processes: System-Wide Cultural Districts' (Sacco, Tavano, Blessi, Nuccio, 2008).

3 My translation from Italian: 'Milano: Il Futuro Contemporaneo'.

MILAN



DISTRETTI CULTURALI



Slides conveying the conceptualization of the Territorially Extended Museum, MET. These slides are part of a Power Point presentation that the counsellor Stefano Boeri delivered during the Symposium, 'Milan: The Contemporary Future' at Bocconi University in Milan on the 14th March 2012. The whole presentation is available in the appendix, annex 1.

1 The overwhelming and overloaded art scene in Milan

2 *that's contemporary* selects a limited number of art places...

3 ... and delivers this selection to its user in a concise and simple way.

THAT'S CONTEM PORARY



Infographic adapted from a diagram created by Andrea for a 2011 Power Point presentation.

The aim of the infographic is to show the function of *thatscontemporary.com* as a mediator between the art scene in Milan and its user by filtering, aggregating and displaying information in an ordered, navigable fashion.

For the original infographic see appendix II.

located in the peripheries.

The symposium functioned as an arena for dialogue amongst different professionals operating in the Milanese art scene. For example, it featured an intervention by Pasquale Leccese, the former Director of *Start Milano*, who gave an insight of the purpose of the gallery network he created; Patrizia Brusarosco, Director of the exhibition space, archive and art residency ViaFarini Docva, who discussed the state of non-profit organizations in Milan. Also, Giulia and I had been invited to talk about the, at the time, newly launched *that's contemporary*. com. In our presentation, we discussed how with *that's contemporary* – and, in particular with the web platform *that's contemporary.com* – we wanted to move away from a conception of the city as understood in physical terms. We highlighted that our grasp of Milan aimed at embracing the informational flows in which the city circulates in the form of articles in newspapers, magazines and journals, TV and radio programs, books, bureaucratic documents, publicity, posts and tweets. We envisioned Milan as a built urban setting embedded in social media and information technologies that are manifested through our own productive engagement with this network of interfaces. We portrayed Milan as a territorially extended hybrid exhibitionary space, which was in line with Boeri's idea of an extended museum distributed across the city. Yet, Giulia and I envisaged the city differently because, as we explained, curating Milan as a hybrid exhibitionary space meant to us curating flows of users, not by arranging the material settings of physical spaces, but by organizing the information that overlays physical structures and topologies. This was clearly addressed by our work with *that's contemporary.com* as it exemplifies the operation of curating Milan in its entirety through filtering and aggregating spatial and temporal information on artworks, artists, art spaces, exhibitions, performances, screenings, talks, seminars and publications. Indeed, by providing guidance to possible usages of art and the city, the platform performs the operation that in the introduction to this thesis I have defined in the proposition of 'curating for others'.

*

One year after the conference at Bocconi University on 17th March 2013, Boeri was dismissed from his position as a consequence of a series of clashes with the Mayor that had accumulated during their collaboration (Liso, 2011; Gallione, 2012). MET will never be realized. In parallel to this dismissal, the fervor around *Start Milano* began to weaken when the organization experienced a drop in the number of annual associated galleries (Bergamini, 2013). In three years, forty-one gallery affiliates became sixteen, consequently undermining the budget for events and communication. Eventually, on 13th March 2014 after eight years, *Start Milano* announced its dissolution on Facebook⁴. On

4 The announcement of the dissolution can be found on a post dated 13th March 2014 on Start Milano Facebook Page, which is still active: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Startmilano/46129458863?fref=ts>

13th September 2013 – the first day of the last ‘Start Week’ – a newsletter titled *Milano Art Bulletin* was inboxed in my email account⁵. The letter announced the beginning of a new informal group clustering together a reduced number of commercial galleries. In this constellation of established galleries, less prominent artistic initiatives, constituting the grassroots of contemporary art practice in Milan, were again completely overlooked. In this evolving and unstable panorama, the hope that Giulia and I had of weaving a network of art places and activities, working in collaboration with Milan’s municipality, faded away along with the dismissal of Boeri. The type of partnership that we had formed with *Start Milano* in an exchange that materialized in the form of skills sharing and reciprocal communication support during the first three years of *that's contemporary* could not be reiterated with *Milano Art Bulletin*. It was not in our interest to nourish a restricted artistic network commissioned by established commercial galleries. Today, *that's contemporary* still pursues the mission shared at the Bocconi’s conference: it mediates art in Milan through the creation of a diversified selection of exhibitions and events held in art places that differ in scale, taste and objectives – from non-profits, to commercial galleries, to private foundations, to public institutions, to informal and temporal venues – but all dedicated to contemporary visual art. In the following section, I will start retracing *that's contemporary*’s journey from the moment in which we began to conceive and develop the web platform.

SCRIPT

In May 2011, as the result of a series of coincidences and a chain of common friends, Giulia and I got in contact with the graphic designer Andrea Amato. At the time, Andrea was a graphic designer for the popular Studio Pitis in Milan and worked in the image identity development of Museo del Novecento, a prominent museum of Italian twentieth century art, which was opened in Milan in December 2010. This was the first time that Andrea had applied a developmental approach on corporate identity for a public cultural institution and he had particularly enjoyed the process. His involvement with *that's contemporary*, which came a few months afterwards, was another opportunity in which he could work independently from the studio, on a cultural project.

After a couple of meetings in which Giulia and I introduced the main scope of *that's contemporary* to Andrea, he joined the project, suggesting that we both complete a set of exercises and tables that he usually asks his clients to fill in when commissioned with the construction of the brand identity for products and services. One of these exercises consisted of a matrix organized in five columns and four rows that was supposed to fix a series of characteristics that *that's contemporary* would encapsulate. These characteristics would determine

5 The first issue of *Milano Art Bulletin* featured the following galleries: kaufmann repetto, Lisson Gallery, Fluxia, Francesca Minini, Zero, Giò Marconi, Lia Rumma, Massimo De Carlo, Monica De Cardenas, Raffaella Cortese and Studio Guenzani. Also the public gallery, Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea (PAC), the private foundation Hangar Bicocca and the non-profit space Peep Hole.



Giulia Restifo, Andrea Amato and I working on the launch of *that's contemporary* in 2012.

the way in which Andrea would design *that's contemporary* from the logo, to the fonts, to the entire web platform structure⁶. Yet, this exercise has impacted not only on the modes of display of *that's contemporary*, but also how we have arranged the organization of resources such as skills, technologies, contacts and money. In other words, this matrix served to predict a program of actions for users and us, the creators of *thatscontemporary.com*. In this sense, this matrix became the script upon which we developed and ran both the interface and the organization. The script ran throughout the whole process of the platform's development.

This script is provided in the next two pages, including the characteristics that Giulia and I entered, which I have translated from Italian. Despite the fact that the structure and the content of this script are entirely preserved, I have adjusted my translation in order to maintain cohesion with the lexicon I have developed in the introduction or that I will deploy later in this thesis. The script [X] follows:

	CURATING QUALITIES	AGENCY What <i>that's contemporary</i> does: the role that it plays in the daily life of its users.	PERFORMANCE How <i>that's contemporary</i> carries out this role: functional aspects.
		ROLES	
EXCLUSIVE ATTRIBUTES		(1 OBJECTIVE) Function of mediation between users and art: create a tool for experiencing art in Milan	Interactive map functioning as a temporal and spatial cartography of art-related events in the city
NECESSARY ATTRIBUTES		(2 OBJECTIVE) Deliver equal care to the activities of art places inhabiting the platform	Membership maintained free and upon invitation. We only include what we like 'Good design'
USEFUL ATTRIBUTES			Producing interviews and reviews
OBSTACLES		Overlaps with the non-profit organization <i>Start Milano</i> ⁷	Abolition of fees and limited financial resources Lack of experience in the art field (no experience in management and arts administration and little experience in practice of curation)

7 As indicated in the matrix (✕ role/obstacle), we have initially classified the overlap of intentions with non-profit organization *Start Milano* as obstacle. In actual fact, we soon realized that these commonalities with *Start Milano* were opportunities for collaboration that materialized with project such as 'That's Meet' (April 2012), the physically first curated event that *that's contemporary* organized in Milan with the support of *Start Milano*.

SCRIPT

	PERSONALITY Immaterial and behavioural aspects of <i>that's contemporary</i>	AUTHORITY Inheritance that <i>that's contemporary</i> has acquired from past activities	VERSATILITY Possible evolution: what else could <i>that's contemporary</i> be, become and do
	Art as opportunity for social interaction Abolition of expert culture: curators = users	Plenty of experience as art users	Creation of a social network
	Horizontality between prominent and small art places		Expansion in other cities Economically self-sustainable platform
			Creation of a mobile application device for the creation of the exhibition on the move
	How to overcome the contradiction of being horizontal but at the same time selective?	Lack of a track record of past projects. We need to construct our reputation from scratch.	

I would like to briefly contextualize this table. It is formed by five columns and four rows. The tags that plot the columns are: 'agency', 'performance', 'personality', 'authority' and 'versatility'. I would define these tags as the qualities of the script. The rows state the position that these qualities hold in the script, if they are 'exclusive', 'necessary', 'useful', or if on the contrary they are 'obstacles' threatening the program of actions prescribed by the script.

What is inserted in 'agency' is fundamental because it determined the way the other columns are filled-out. For the sake of clarity, I would like to state that I understand the agency of the interface as the set of aims that determine the ways in which the interface operates. Obviously, the agency expressed in the script of the interface is the agency of the curator(s) writing the script. In light of my argument in the introduction, this also means that the curator(s)' agency conveyed in the script determines the agency of scripted users, who are the imagined users inhabiting the platform according to how the curator(s) have predicted it. Clearly, such predictions might partially conflict with the multiple agencies of the actual users of the platform; this will be tackled later in the chapter.

The agency of the interface is expressed in the enactment of the characteristics – the curating qualities – delineated in the other columns of the script: 'performance', 'personality' and 'authority'.

Information entered in 'performance' designates the tangible characteristics that have been inscribed in the structure of the platform.

The column 'personality' articulates the more intangible aspects of the script and highlights the formation of an exhibition as a social space. It tackles the paradox of aspiring to a horizontal exhibitionary model but by operating within a curatorial system, which almost by definition functions according to mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. In 'personality', emergence of active 'exhibition users' appears. These are themes that will be considered in this chapter and further explored in the second.

The column 'personality' runs in tandem with the column 'authority', which was intended to demonstrate a proven track record in the art field. If we could not claim forms of authority given our inexperience at the time as art professionals, what we did highlight and value during the process of the interface's development was indeed our experience as art users, which further emphasizes the idea that there is a very weak boundary between users and curators.

Finally, the column 'versatility' encompasses our predictions for what we initially imagined that *that's contemporary* could become in the future. These insertions express our expectations of the project, and even though some of these expectations have not been fully realized, they have been faced over the five years of *that's contemporary* activity. I will return to these issues in the second chapter, as they have been a focus of attention during the development of *that's contemporary's* mobile application.

Every time I discuss one of the characteristics of the script, I will indicate this with [X] and specify its position in the script by indicating its column and row.

Mediation

We wanted the interface aimed to be recognized as an example of ‘good design’ ([X] attribute scripted: in performance / necessary). Andrea in particular intended this quality to match with Sean Dockray’s description of, ‘the dominant aesthetic values of user interface design [...] appealing to principles of simplicity, cleanliness, and clarity’ (Dockray, 2013, p. 187). With this in mind, Andrea contacted his former university colleague, Paolo Tesei, who is based in Paris working as a web designer under the nickname of Mosne. Working remotely from each other, we started to develop the interface of *thatscontemporary.com*, which progressed through the design of a series of layouts that were discussed and then modified each time until we reached the final interface, which was organized in the following exhibitionary categories/sections: *Events*, *Places*, *Projects*, *About*. Only in a second phase, we added the section *Hideout*, which I will discuss later in this chapter. Within these exhibitionary sections users experience the hybrid exhibitionary space.

The section *Projects* functions as a sort of online portfolio, showing all the initiatives that we curated or that we were somehow involved in. In this regard, the chapter three will discuss in depth an example of a project that we curated, *The Art Pacemaker*.

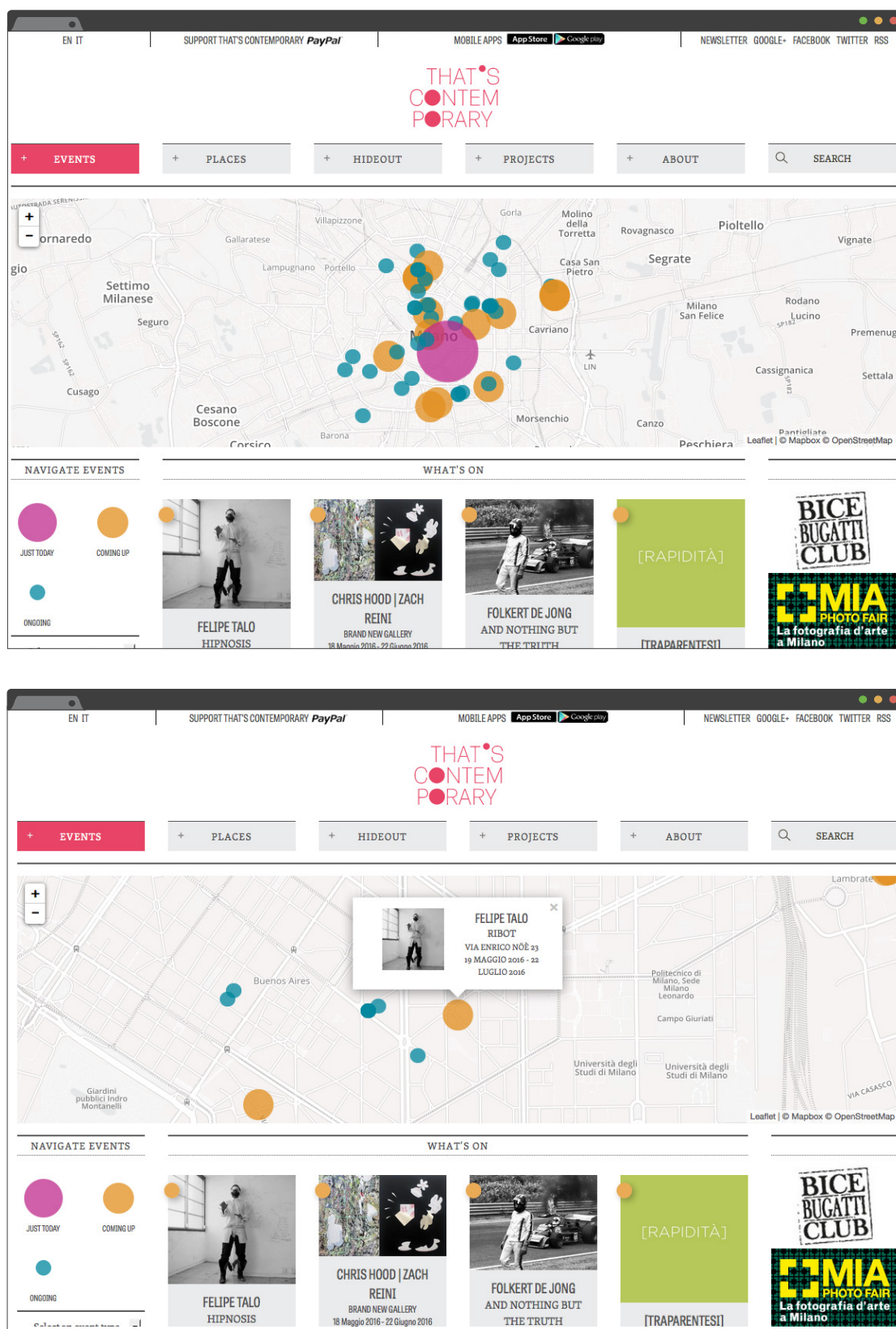
About briefly explains the vision and mission of *that’s contemporary* and also credits the active contributors of the project.

The two main sections found on the platform are *Events* and *Places*. They are connected and interdependent with each other forming a series of networks as I will describe in the following sub-sections.

Event nodes

The main exhibitionary space is the section *Events*, which is also the homepage of the platform. In this section, there is an interactive map functioning as a temporal and spatial cartography of art-related events in Milan ([X] attribute scripted: in: performance / exclusive and necessary). This exhibitionary section enables users to visualize events both in time and space. Indeed, on the homepage map, events nodes are represented with dot indicators that change colour and size in relation to their opening and closure dates. A temporal account of proximity is, in this way, inscribed in the platform. A dot is yellow (and mid-size) before the start date of the event node; it turns pink (and bigger) on the start date; it stays as blue (and gets smaller) in the time between the start and the end date; and it disappears from the map in homepage after the end date. The big pink dots can be *de-scribed* by the following text: ‘the event opens today and this might be the best chance to make the most of it’. The *in-scription* being:

CHAPTER ONE



Screenshots of the homepage, section *Events*, taken on the 15th of December, 2015. A video screen capture of thatstemporary.com taken on the 16th of June 2016 is available as digital appendix (n°II)

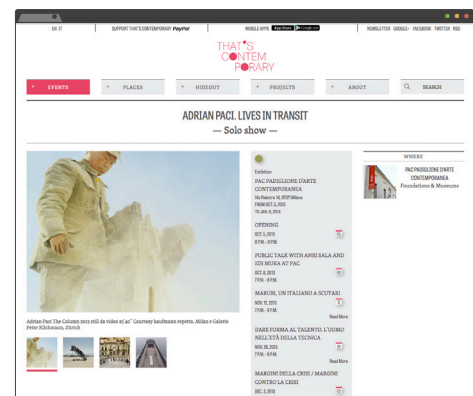
translate the message above by making the dots of the event more visible than the other dots so that it can easily grab the attention of the user over the rest of information⁸.

A corresponding temporal organization structures the changing position of the image box representing the same event node in the grid below the map. The grid organizes this information so that the event nodes that are coming up soonest appear first and are progressively and automatically rearranged into lower rows, each time I add a new event node that is positioned closer in time. I will further consider the logic of the map's exhibitionary mechanism later on in this chapter.

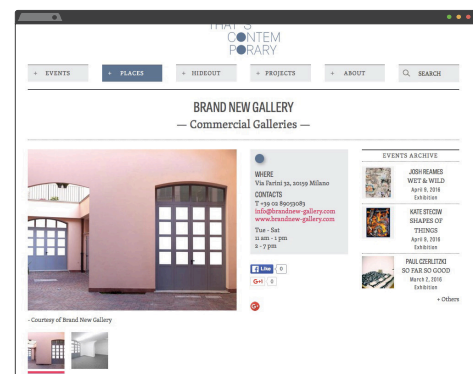
In *Events*, users can tap on dots on the map and boxes in the grid to access the individual pages of events. These events are grouped together according to a typology that classifies them as follows: *Exhibitions*, *Openings*, *Finissage*, *Performances*, *Talks*, *Workshops*, *Conferences*, *Readings*, *Festivals*, *Fairs*, *Parties* and *Screenings*. Each event entered on the platform is a node in time and space bound to a hybrid exhibitionary network connecting other event nodes. This network is hybrid because each event node corresponds to a location in physical space, meaning that event nodes have an informational existence as much as a physical one. Yet, these event nodes might be bound to a multiplicity of temporal references, which are other event nodes, (sub-) event nodes. For example, the lifecycle of a collective show is very likely to be scheduled along a palimpsest of other event nodes such as the exhibition opening, as well as other activities that take place halfway such as a performance or an artist's talk. This forms a network within a network, yet each node also maintains its own existence as well. Apart from showing temporal and geographic information, each event node also includes images of the physical event, a descriptive paragraph of text and a link to the place node where the event is hosted, which is archived in the section *Places*.

Place nodes

Therefore, each event node is connected to a specific (art) place node with a geographic location in the hybrid exhibitionary network. Place nodes are not effected by time as they do not contain temporal information processed by the interface; rather they include static entries such as images that are illustrative of the physical place they

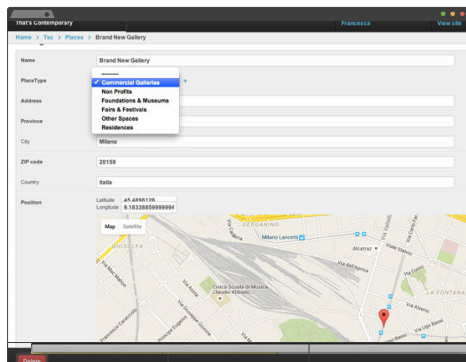


Screenshot of the individual page of an event node bound to a multiplicity of other sub-event nodes, taken on the 15th December 2015.

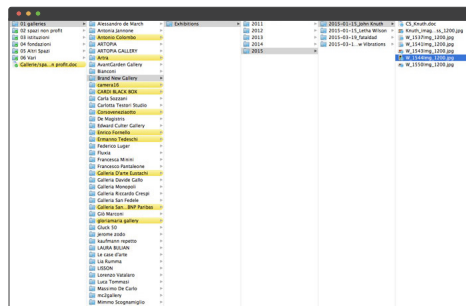


Screenshot of the individual page of a place node, taken on the 1st April 2016.

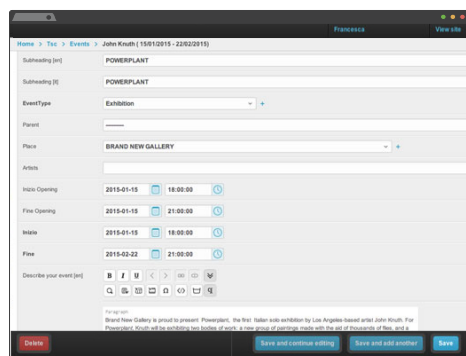
⁸ This de-scription/in-scription is inspired by an example illustrated by Akrich and Latour in 'A Summary of a Convenient Vocabulary for the Semiotics of Human and Nonhuman Assemblages' (1992) to explain the concepts of script, inscription, prescription and description. They write, 'the heavy keys of hotels are de-scribed by the following text DO NOT FORGET TO BRING THE KEYS BACK TO THE FRONT DESK, the in-scription being: TRANSLATE the message above by HEAVY WEIGHTS ATTACHED TO KEYS TO FORCE CLIENTS TO BE REMINDED TO BRING BACK KEYS TO THE FRONT DESK' (Akrich and Latour, 1992, p. 259-260).



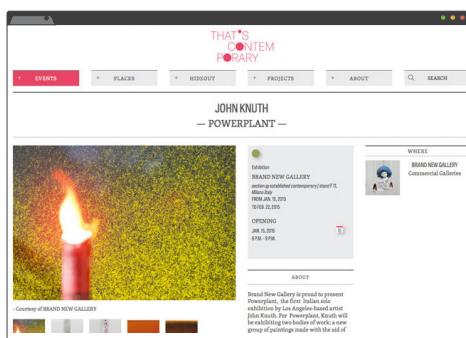
Screenshot of the individual page of a place node from the admin panel, taken on the 1st April 2016.



The Dropbox folders containing event nodes chronologically archived and organized within the folders of their hosting place nodes, taken on the 18th March 2015.



Screenshot of the individual page of an event node from the admin panel, taken on 1st April, 2016.



Screenshot of an event node, taken on the 1st April 2016.

represent, physical address, opening hours, phone number, email and website. Place nodes are classified in the following typologies: *Commercial galleries*, *Non-Profits*, *Foundations & Museums*, *Fairs & Festivals*, *Other Spaces* and *Artistic residences*.

Interrelations

Event nodes and place nodes are interrelated and this relationship has been crucial to the ways in which the platform works. On the one hand, the function of place nodes is to locate event nodes in the physical space of Milan and in the digital space of the platform. On the other hand, event nodes represent the material upon which the profile of a place node is constructed. In this relationship, event nodes that are hosted in the same place node constitute an archive that links to form an exhibitionary network that is fixed in space but that unfolds in time, from September 2011, as it contains events up to two months prior to the launch of the platform in November 2011. The temporal referent of an event node is always entered by a human curator – who, in this case, operates as the editor of the platform – assigning an opening and closing date to the activity. However, the terrestrial position (that coincides with latitude and longitude numerals) of a place node is entered by a human just once – unless the place node physically relocates and changes address in Milan. This geographic information locates not only the place node but also, automatically, all of the other event nodes that it hosts. Therefore, while the temporal position of an event node is manually entered by a human, it is an algorithmic delegation that processes the spatial position of the event node in the exhibitionary network and I will further comment on this co-curation between humans and non-humans in the next section of this chapter. Another way event nodes link to each other is through the function of *Nearby Events*, which is again determined by the spatial position of the place nodes hosting event nodes. Indeed, this function automatically sets together and displays event nodes that are located in the same spatial surrounding and in the same time span⁹. In this sense, the interface inscribes

an exhibitionary network that associates event nodes that are simultaneous

9 Initially, we prearranged spatial surroundings according to specific urban areas in Milan: Porta Venezia, Loreto, Brera, Garibaldi, Porta Romana, Navigli, Lambrate and Centre. This was changed in a second stage, when the interface was set up to connect event nodes that are located within a 1 Km radius.

and that are not hosted in the same place node but rather within spatially adjacent place nodes. Finally, event nodes link to each other through a tagging system, independent of place nodes, created by a series of categories forming a tagging cloud, which try to specify the medium(s) that each event node might feature, such as *Painting, Drawing, Sculpture, Installation, Performance, Video, Photography, Sound, Architecture, Design* and *Curating*. Users might tap on these tags to visualize event nodes along exhibitionary networks that are organized according to artistic medium typologies that within the platform are beyond spatial or temporal indications.

These different types of networks weaving together event nodes with place nodes are where the experience of users is mediated. In this sense, mediation occurs along the interrelations between the various nodes in the network.

Horizontality

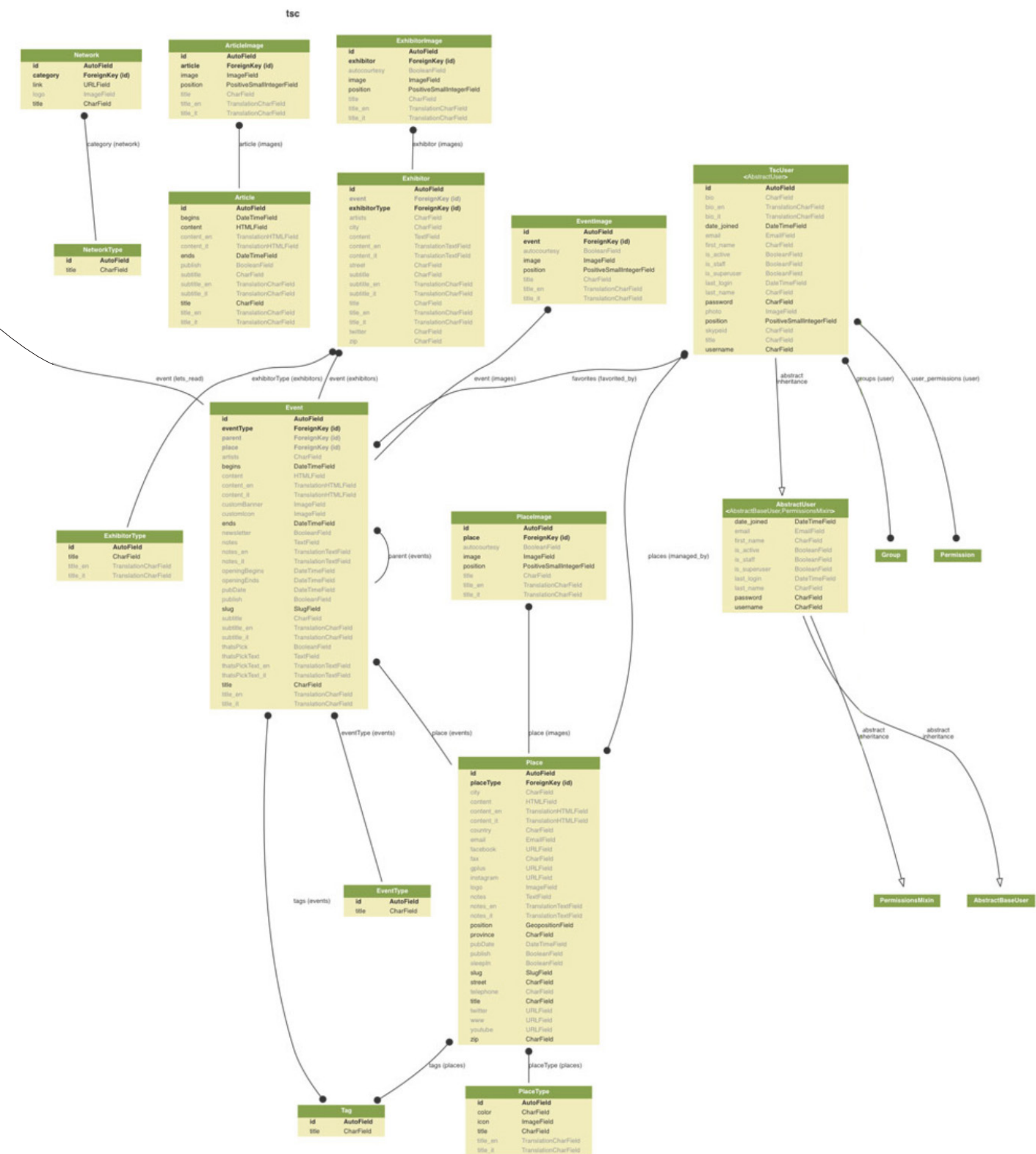
The relationship between place nodes and event nodes has been key to the way in which we could give an equal amount of attention to all of the activity of place nodes inhabiting the platform (✕ attribute scripted in: agency / necessary, '*Deliver equal care to the activities of art places inhabiting the platform*'). This is illustrated by how the mode event nodes are organized in the section *Events* that, as explained above, designates a horizontal framework in which a range of event nodes that differ in size, scope and approach are displayed with equal weight in a time-space structure. The dynamic structure that organizes this configuration allocates attention according to a criterion that prioritises event nodes. In this sense, the platform executes an exhibitionary method in which prestige – meaning reputation or financial potential – is not valued, *activity* is. Therefore, the more a place node is active, organizing and hosting event nodes, the more it will be exhibited in the platform. The platform is, in this way, performing Actor Network Theory as in an actor network the most prominent actors – nodes – in a network are those in which activity most impacts on the overall network. Horizontality is indeed achieved in this system, because the activity of nodes is equally treated by our curatorial algorithms, allocating the same amount of attention to them.

Lock-in

The construction of this mechanism allows for reflection on how the technical system of the platform – which expresses the curator's desire for horizontality, rather than the convention of hierarchical structure – can elicit questions regarding the distribution of curatorial authorships amongst human and non-human actors. Since its conception, the platform's scripted curatorial arrangement, keeps executing an allocation of value/attention that is automatically computed by the platform itself. It is feasible to say that we delegated the attention economy of the platform to a chain of algorithmic non-human agents. This approach suspends the reification of existing human taste or preference, turning curating



Information architecture created by the software developer Luca Corti, illustrating thatscontemporary.com's database structure since April 2013.



into a set of contingencies, collectively processed along a disinterested network of delegations. The technical system of the platform performs some of the work of the curator.

This argument might be contested because, after all, such delegation was inscribed and automated into the mechanisms of the exhibitionary interface according to a script that was agreed by humans, Giulia, Andrea, Paolo and I. In this way, it could be said that algorithms play a role of servile deference towards the curators' intentions and, borrowing ANT's vocabulary, they could be considered as intermediaries, which as explained in the introduction are actors in a network that carry an agency without causing any significant transformation to this agency. Nevertheless, I think that this is not the case. Algorithms, via establishing the roles of the technical system, create constrictions. My initial agency as a curator – which was materialized into the script – was automatized within the platform. This was not just a technicality; rather it turned into a *condition* structuring and limiting the ways I could transform my own curatorial agency within the framework of the interface. After the platform was programmed and the system tested by users, I could not apply any other criteria in the allocation of attention to event nodes, unless modifying the platform's algorithms with the consequence of changing the configuration of the platform. In conclusion, the exhibition is 'locked-in' into a configuration that could be only moderately challenged. Jaron Lanier in his book *You Are Not a Gadget* (2010) deploys the term 'lock-in' to describe how older software shapes the design of newer software. Lock-in refers to a process that guides the future development of technology in certain ways narrowing the range of possibilities in which technology could have developed otherwise. Lanier writes:

The brittle character of mature computer programs can cause digital designs to get frozen into place by a process known as lock-in. This happens when many software programs are designed to work with an existing one. The process of significantly changing software in a situation in which a lot of other software is dependent on it is the hardest thing to do. So it almost never happens. (LARNIER, 2010, P. 7)

In the application of this concept to the exhibitionary space of the platform, it shows how the curator(s)' agency inscribed in the structure of the platform turned into the restriction threatening the evolution of this same agency. Later in this chapter, I will show how I could trick these constraints and partially negotiate changes in this system by developing other exhibitionary structures around it, while still maintaining its horizontality.

TRACING 'THE EXHIBITIONARY'

As explained in the introduction, 'the exhibitionary' refers to the unfolding of

the exhibition through the use of the exhibition. What I aim to show in this section is how users produce 'the exhibitionary' through *thatscontemporary.com*.

In order to trace the exhibitionary unfolding of the platform, I have decided to create a user interacting with the platform *thatscontemporary.com*. This was initially inspired by reading an early article by Latour, 'Social Theory and the Study of Computerized Work Sites' (1995)¹⁰. Despite my initial interest triggered by Latour's text, a deeper investigation into this approach led to the discovery of Lev Manovich's essay 'How to Follow Software Users' (2012). This text argues how, 'the use of software reconfigures most basic social and cultural practices and makes us rethink the concepts and theories we developed to describe them' (Manovich, 2012, p. 3). It is along these lines that Manovich suggests that the traceability of users can act as a method to understand the interaction between software and users and to grasp the interface in its performance. He writes:

In software culture [...] we now interact with dynamic "software performances." I use the word "performance" because [...] we are engaging not with pre-defined static documents but with the dynamic outputs of a real-time computation happening on our device and/or the server. [...] The final *media experience constructed by software usually does not correspond to any single static document stored in some media*. [...] We need to be able to record and analyze *interactive experiences*, i.e. concrete temporal interactions of particular users with the software – as opposed to only analyzing media "documents" (i.e., the elements which are used to construct these experiences). (IBID, PP. 3-4)

In the same paper, Manovich himself compares the proposition to follow users through their performance interacting with the software to Latour's Actor Network Theory expressed in *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (1987), where it is suggested that science should be analysed not via studying scientific documents but by following scientists in their laboratories. In line with this, Manovich says, 'we need to follow users as they interact with software, rather than analyzing media documents by themselves [...] For example, we should follow the users as they navigate through a web site – as opposed to limiting ourselves to studying the content of this site' (Manovich, 2012, p. 11). In light of this, instead of limiting this thesis to the description of the platform's parts, as if they were static elements, I would like to follow a user that, moving from one node to another, actually *performs* the platform through the engendering of exhibitionary networks. Put

10 In this text, Latour uses two characters planning to meet at the Eurotunnel Gate at Waterloo Station. His aim is to show the, '[agency] redistribution of humans and non-humans due to the pervasiveness of computerized work sites' (Latour, 1995, p. 1). Such distribution is described along the path of delegations that the account traces. In addition to this essay, other academic texts that I have encountered in my research have deployed characters as a strategy to explore and understand social situations (Kennedy, 2011; Yaneva, 2003).

in other words, I will follow a user interacting with the interface in order to capture an actual instance of the exhibitionary space that is co-created between interface and user, that which 'only emerges during this interaction and which is different from session to session and from user to user' (ibid, p. 11). Therefore, the exhibitionary network that I intend to describe is one of those exhibitionary networks that we, producers/curators, have prescribed to a scripted user. Yet, it should be understood as an attempt to account for the 'gap' between the curators' prescriptions of these networks and the ways users actually use these scripted networks. In these terms, the exhibitionary network I will account for will stem from three different but correlating parties: (1) the scripted user, which is the sum of the ways we imagined a user would interact with the platform; (2) the aggregation of data on actual users' behaviours and flows interacting with the platform, tracked by web analytical tools and, finally, (3) the translator and curator of this thesis – myself – whose agency is to create and operate a user to unveil 'the exhibitionary gap' between the scripted user and the actual users of the platform. Before going ahead, I would like to further discuss the role of these three parties forming the exhibitionary network.

Firstly, the exhibitionary network is the outcome of the scripted user, a concept I have defined in the introduction. The scripted user is the creation of my work as a curator upon which the exhibitionary platform has been organized. It is within the projection of a scripted user into the structure of the interface that the exhibitionary platform takes shape and where actual users move. As Simon Sheikh (2007) writes, '[m]aking things public is an attempt to make a public.' Adding that, 'a public is an imaginary endeavour [...] through a specific mode of address that is supposed to produce, actualize or even activate this imagined entity' (Sheikh, 2007, p. 178). Therefore, for Sheikh creating an exhibition is about creating a public that exists – and here Sheikh borrows Michael Warner's argument addressed in *Publics and Counterpublics* (2002) – 'by virtue of being addressed' (Sheikh, 2007, p. 178). In this sense, by addressing the structure of the platform in a way that matches how the scripted user would inhabit it, I have induced actual users – the public – to inhabit and therefore actualize the exhibitionary space of this platform. Yet, actual users might not enact the exhibition as the curator(s) imagine.

Secondly, the exhibitionary network of this thesis reflects the major percentages of the behaviors and flows performed by actual users tracked by web analytical tools – Google Analytics, as well as Facebook and Twitter – that, since the foundation of *that's contemporary*, have traced users and have also provided demographic summaries across the network of interfaces through which *that's contemporary* exists. They are the evidence of the exhibitionary space in *use* and the data upon which I have constructed Ann¹¹. She is, in fact, the result of the qualities and behaviors that are shared by the majority of actual

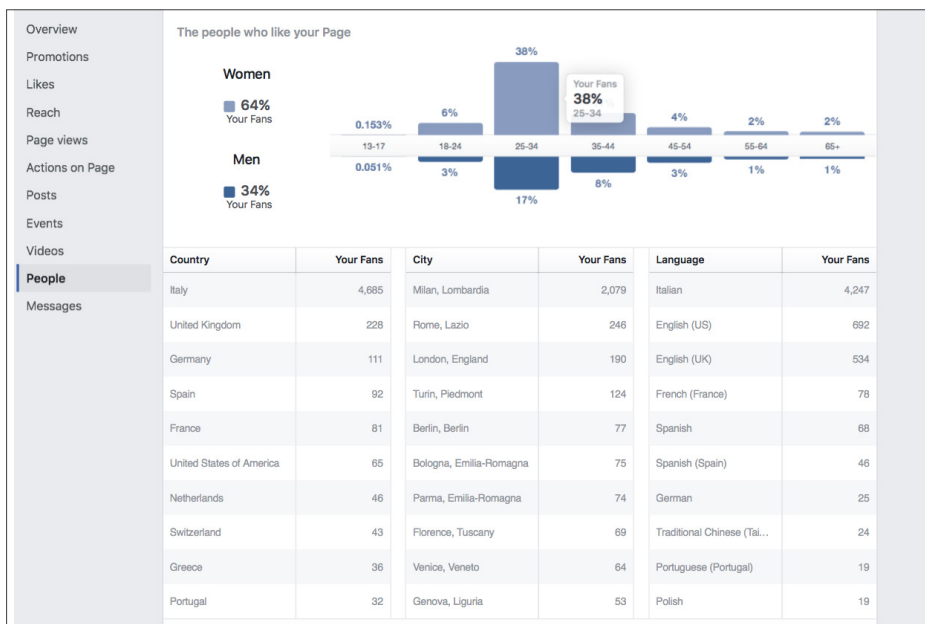
11 See the entire set of data extracted from Google Analytics used to create Ann and her navigation in appendix V.

users of the platform.

ANN IS A HABITUAL USER OF THAT'S CONTEMPORARY.

SHE IS A THIRTY-YEAR-OLD WOMAN FROM MILAN PASSIONATE ABOUT ARTS.

Evidence taken by analytical tools do not show distinct uses (i.e. networks unfolded by distinct users); rather they are an aggregation of individual uses that are delivered to their readers in the form of diagrams and infographics. They illustrate the accumulation of many exhibitionary networks unfolded by



Report extracted from Google Analytics sharing the social user flow between the 1st April 2012 and the 1st April 2015, depicting statistics about users that landed on *that'scontemporary.com* via social networks.

Screenshot of a Facebook Insights page, taken on the 12th April 2016. This page shows demographics about users that like *that's contemporary's* page

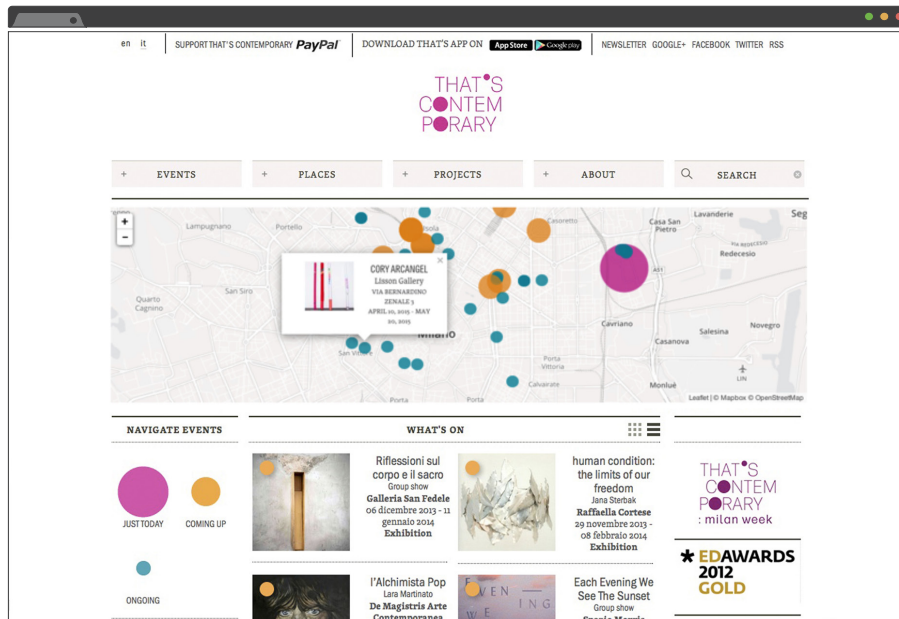
groups of users demographically profiled. I would like to provide some of the figures that led to the construction of Ann. According to Google Analytics, between 1st April 2012 and 1st April 2015¹², *thatscontemporary.com* totals 106,153 sessions, meaning that the exhibition has been *used* 106,153 times. There are 56,428 users – in jargon ‘unique visitors’ – who have carried out these uses. 50,443 of these users are returning exhibition users, in other words *habitual users* (47.52% of total). According to Facebook, 64% of our exhibition users – ‘fans’ in Facebook jargon¹³ – are women; 38% of these female users are aged between 25 and 34 years old; and, not surprisingly, the widest user group is located in Milan. Ann is, therefore, a representation of one of the most habitual users of *that's contemporary*.

The third factor that effects the exhibitionary network is my *translation*, which, as explained in the introduction, refers to the action of establishing commonalities and convergences between things that were previously unconnect. Myself as a curator, *in-scriptor* or *translator* of the exhibitionary network performed in this thesis, should be considered as an actor to follow, interpreting the process of network construction (Cressman, 2009). Indeed, to unfold the exhibitionary network, I make assumptions about Ann's reasons for undertaking specific flows and behaviors within the hybrid exhibitionary space of the platform. In my work as a translator, Ann is in fact an actor network, which is also a *black box*, literally meaning that she is both an actor in a network and a network within a larger network¹⁴. On the one side, Ann is a user, an actor, in an exhibitionary network that moves forward in this thesis thanks to her interactions within the interface. On the other side, she is a network, as she is the result of an operation of translating the evidence of the actual use of the platform with the translator's assumptions deduced on the basis of this information. Treating Ann as actor and a network will offer two accounts of the exhibitionary network: first, a *narrative account* – what Manovich (2012) calls ‘performance’ – that shows Ann unfolding the exhibitionary network; second, a *descriptive account* that essentially *describes* the unfolding of this exhibitionary network through the displacement of a series of figures from the analytics and the inference I

12 I decided to place the analysis within a temporal frame that covers a period of three years in order to have a representative statistical landscape of user flows, behaviors and numbers characterizing *thatscontemporary.com*. Data examined in this actor network are fully available in appendix.

13 Facebook fans refer to users who marked the *that's contemporary* profile page on Facebook with ‘like’.

14 According to ANT, anything can be considered both an actor and a network; this notion is underpinned by the name of the theory. ANT has borrowed the computer technical term *black box* to explain this double ontology. The concept of black box has been thoroughly explained by Sean Dockray in ‘Interface, Access, Loss’ (2013), ‘In Object-Oriented Programming (OOP), a programmer designs the software that he or she is writing around “objects,” where each object is conceptually divided into “public” and “private” parts. The public parts are accessible to other objects, but the private ones are hidden to the world outside the boundaries of that object. This is one instance of a “black box” – a thing that can be known through its inputs and outputs, even in total ignorance of its internal mechanisms’ (Dockray, 2013, p. 186). In other words, internal workings – i.e. the network – inside of a box, an object, or an actor remain unknown to its users. Which means that any individual node in a network is made of internal networks that might be invisible outside of that node, as the node is known in terms of input and output in the network.



Screenshot of thatscontemporary.com's homepage, showing the event node pop-window of the event node, *Hot Topic*, which is a solo show by Cory Arcangel at Lisson Gallery.

make in the role of the *translator*¹⁵.

MARCH 2ND, 2015

14:41 PM – VIA FIREFOX

Ann is about to enter the keyword 'that's contemporary' on Google to find the exhibitionary platform. In a few seconds, Google Search shows a series of results. Ann clicks on the first one and lands on the homepage of www.thatscontemporary.com. She starts to tap on dot indicators placed on the map in the area around Castello Sforzesco (where her office is located) and she is looking for an exhibition to visit in this area. Through clicking on the various dots, pop-up windows open identifying names of galleries, artists and exhibitions, as well as opening and closing dates. She pauses on one event node, Cory Arcangel's solo show at Lisson Gallery, which is flagged as a *That's Pick*. In the meantime, a series of e-mails and notifications that appear in pop-up windows on the top right of the laptop screen capture her attention. She needs to go back to her work and ceases to navigate of the platform.

Despite the small quantity of data available about organic searches, I have assumed that Ann is one of the 3.55% of my exhibition users typing the word

15 Despite that I am aware of the redundancy of using the adjective *descriptive* and the verb *describe* in the same sentence, it serves to highlight ANT's belief that we should not explain but just *describe*. Latour writes, 'I'd say that if your description needs an explanation, it's not a good description, that's all. Only bad descriptions need an explanation' (Latour, 2004, p. 67). It follows that Ann being a black box, will function as an actor or node in the network as well as a network of evidence, which will remain concealed in her performance in the network, but it will be de-scribed in the descriptive account.



Report extracted from Google Analytics showing the user flow between 1st April 2012 and 1st April 2015. This figure represents the majority of journeys that users undertook moving through pages to form the platform in that specific period of time. It also shows these users grouped according to their in nationalities.

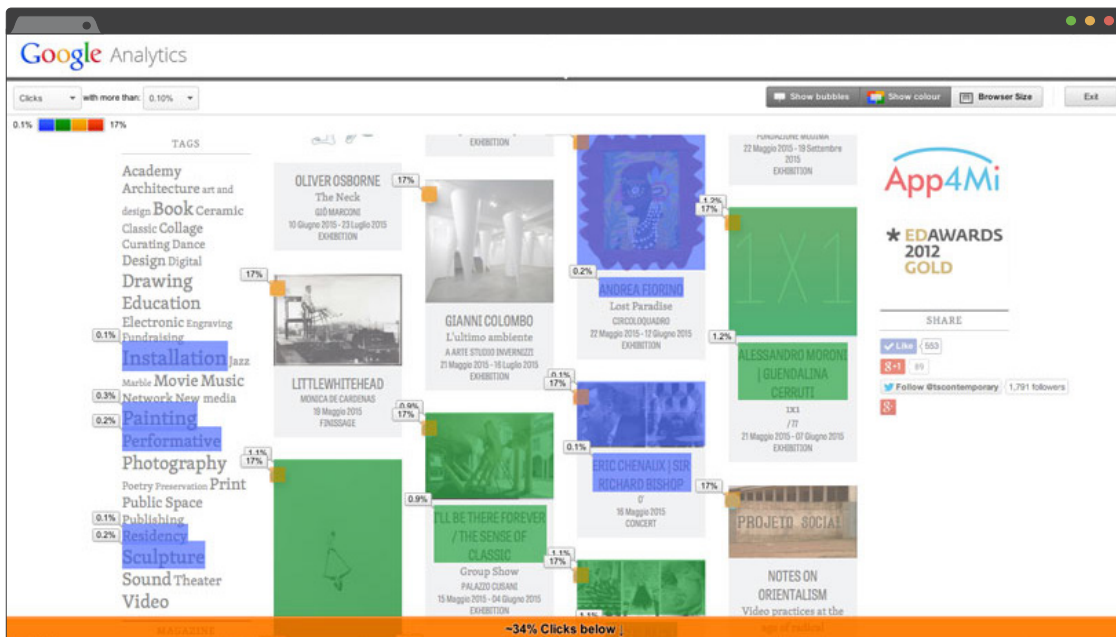
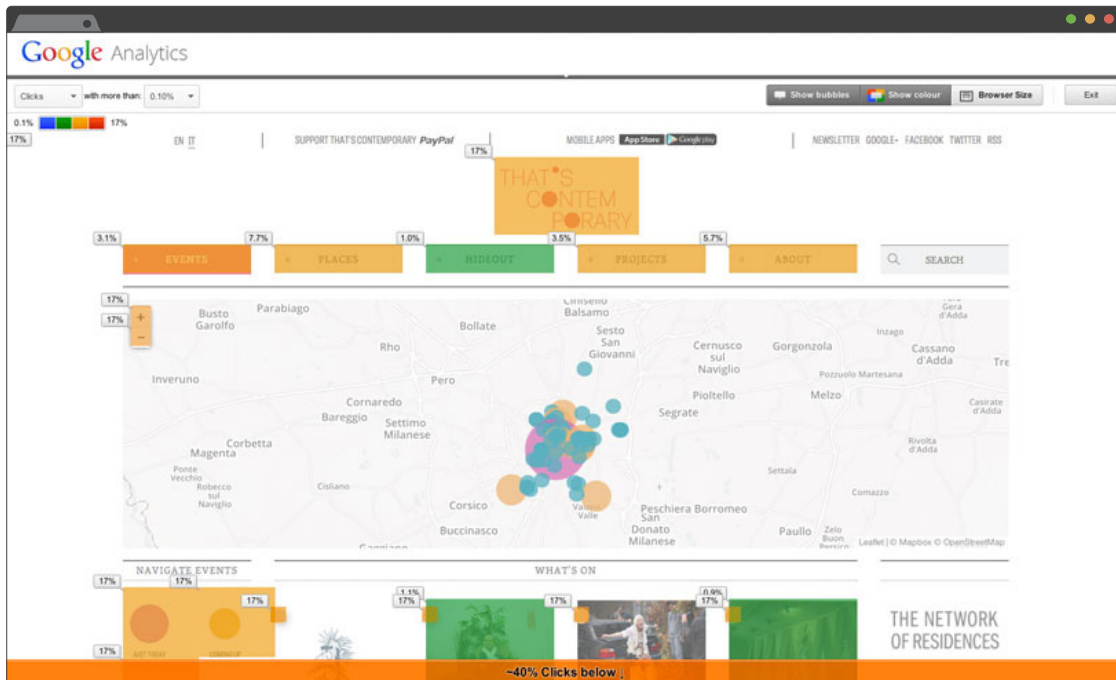
‘that’s contemporary’ on Google Search¹⁶. Having already assessed above that Ann is located in Milan, I also presumed that she uses Google Italia, therefore the first result in her Google search is the platform thatscontemporary.com. Given these circumstances, Ann clicks and is directed to the landing page of the platform – the scripted starting node of the exhibitionary network of thatscontemporary.com. In this way, Ann is performing according to my scripted user. Indeed, Google Analytics shows that the 36.51% of actual exhibition users that have completed organic research land on the homepage of the platform. The other 63.49% are fragmented into smaller user groups, in which users land on different subpages of the platform, using the exhibition space according to their own scripts (and therefore abusing my exhibitionary script).

The behavior of users within the same page node is traced by In-Page Analytics; this gives more insight about the exhibitionary experience of Ann on the homepage (clicking on dots on the map). In accordance with Google In-Page Analytics’ figures sourced on 16th May 2015, 60% of users’ activities happen exclusively between the map and the first row of images in the below grid. The other 40% scroll down to the third row in the grid. Just 34% scroll down below the third row. Plus, the average time spent on the homepage is 00:03:04, while time spent on the whole platform is 00:03:14, implying that the average user spends the majority of time navigating the homepage node. This is also supported by the fact that many actual users drop off the platform after the first interaction with the homepage (Google Analytics recorded 70,200 drop-offs)¹⁷.

Ann’s behavior represents the biggest group conveyed by these figures: she uses the above part of the exhibition homepage, the map, and drops off before moving to another exhibitionary node. In this way, I made Ann use just

16 According to Google Analytics, 49,545 users (46.67% of Total) access the platform through an organic search on Google, meaning that they write a keyword on a browser. A definite 3.55% of these 49,545 users have entered the keyword ‘that’s contemporary’. The number is low supposedly because 82.72% keywords are listed on Google Analytics as ‘not provided’. Since October 2011, due to changes occurred in the way Google harvests data, if a user is logged into any Google product when navigating, the referral data relating their search is hidden. This might be considered as an example of a break in user traceability..

17 Interactions occurring within the same page, such as clicking on dots and boxes, are not recorded as interactions.



Two screenshots showing the Google In-Page Analytics' figures sourced on 16th May 2015. In-Page Analytics makes real time visual assessments of how users interact with a web page. To gather the information included in this text, I navigated *In-Page Analytics* the way I would navigate the homepage of the platform: each interactive part of the platform corresponds to data showing the number of clicks that this particular element has accumulated.

one exhibitionary node – the homepage – even though *thatscontemporary.com* is scripted to be navigated differently. For example, a scripted network would go from the homepage node where the scripted user taps on an event node, and is then directed to this event node (in Google Analytics jargon, second interaction), where eventually they would click onto the place node featured on the profile of the event node (third interaction) and would finally be directed to the profile page of the place node. Another scripted scenario is that a user lands on an event node, clicks on another event node featured in the sub-section *Nearby Events* and is then redirected to that event node which is located in the (hybrid) surrounding of the previous event node. In this sense, Ann represents one of the uses of my curated script making the 'gap' appear between the scripted exhibition and one of the many actual exhibitions that a user might complete, but also the gap between the scripted user and the actual user¹⁸.

Therefore, as I have tried to argue, the platform was scripted to unravel particular exhibitionary networks but in the majority of cases the script breaks and shatters along a multiplicity of unanticipated users' actions unfolding unforeseen networked exhibitionary formations. In accordance with curators von Bismarck and Rogoff (2010), the exhibition happens in a 'gap', which is the space between the script that I, as one of the curators, inscribed in the interface and prescribed to users, as well as the actual uses, or abuses, of this script. In this formation, users are all active parts making the exhibitionary platform exist as a continuously changing organism in a constant process of becoming.

CHALLENGING THE SCRIPT VIA CREATING NEW NODES

Our intention for the platform was not only to exist as a clustered, diversified selection of place nodes and event nodes but that it would also pursue a second level of curation through '*producing interviews and reviews*' that would be inserted in relation to event nodes in the platform (✕ attribute scripted in: performance / useful). At first, we embarked on the demanding proposition of producing a series of video interviews featuring the making process of exhibitions and creating a new exhibitionary section to display them in the platform. To do so, I had commissioned Claudia Di Lascia, a video-maker that was a friend and former university colleague during my BA in Communication and Information Technology.

The expanded exhibition

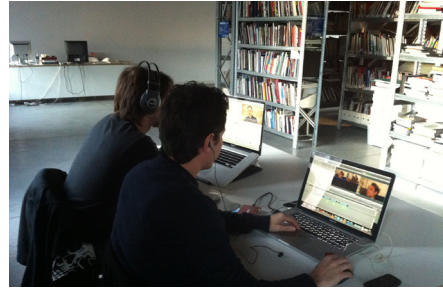
Claudia, Giulia and I decided to start creating contextual videos with the help of colleagues, who regularly collaborated with Claudia. Each video featured artists, gallerists, curators and others discussing the exhibitions that were about to take place. Giulia and I organized, prepared and carried out the interviews.

18 Another use that conflicts with the script is given by Google Analytics' illustration evidencing that the most common exhibitionary network that progresses further than the first interaction presents a flow of users that moves from the homepage, to an event node, to the homepage and then to another event node (8,690 users). This shows that a common use of *thatscontemporary.com* is similar to the way users wield the remote control when TV zapping: switching from one event node to another.

While Claudia directed, her collaborator Alessandro Covi edited and Andrea Amato produced the graphic elements of the videos.

These interviews were trying to challenge the notion of an exhibition enclosed in the time between official opening and ending dates and limited to the perimeter of the gallery space. Such a proposition is not a novelty in and of itself¹⁹; it became relevant in this context because it antagonised the set mechanism of *thatscontemporary.com*, in which any exhibition, displayed as event node, has to feature starting and ending dates as mandatory information. As explained beforehand, the exhibitionary system recognizes event nodes as confined within a determined span of time. These videos challenged that. We wanted to instead acknowledge and render public stages of the exhibition making process that are usually concealed from the public. This explains why we staged the interviews in uninstalled exhibitions. As in Jörn Schaffaff's essay, 'Challenging Institutional Standard Time' (2014), the question that these videos were implicitly addressing was 'when does the exhibition start?' Schaffaff's answer is that the exhibition starts, 'already with the events that are hidden from the public. What is generally considered the exhibition is just the publicly visible part of a longer-term processes and of limited duration' (Schaffaff, 2014, p. 194). In line with this, we understood these videos as an attempt to challenge the restrictions of our own (locked-in) script running the platform and enable a public exhibitionary space showing the stage before the formal exhibition opening. We wanted to connect this media to the event nodes featuring the exhibitions that the videos were unveiling before their official exhibition starting date as a way to publicly acknowledge the misrepresentative temporal framework of the interface .

We planned to initially self-produce videos and open the exhibitionary section, *Channel*, in which they would have been available for streaming. Then, we would have tried to get galleries and museums to commission more videos turning this activity into a form of backing for the platform²⁰. While we were conceiving the channel within the platform, I opened an account on Vimeo for *that's contemporary* and progressively started to upload the video interviews,

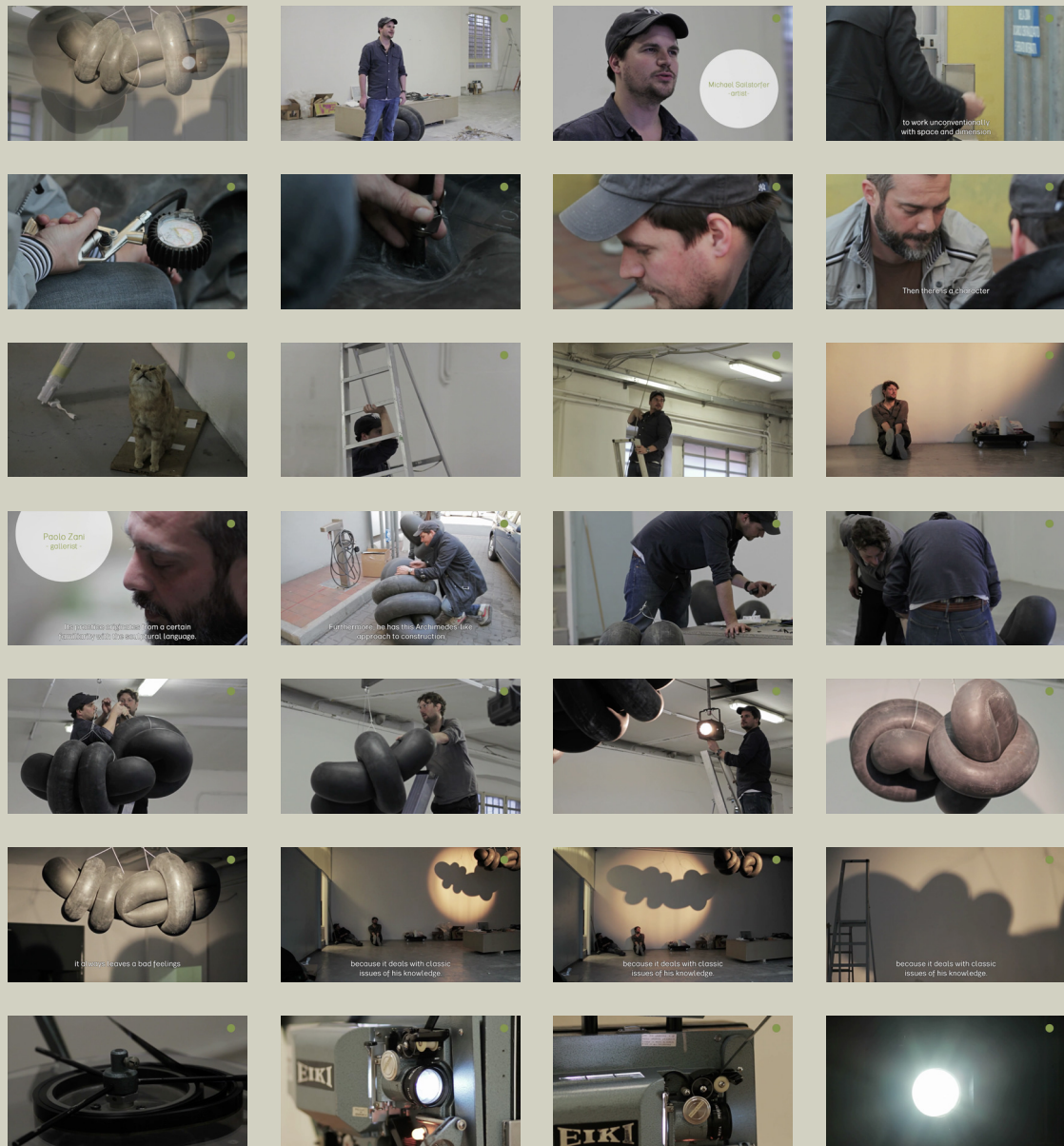


that's contemporary's video makers creating the video interviews for the platform's section *Channel*. Specifically, in the image below they are shooting the work-in-progress of the Franco Guerzoni's exhibition, *Museo Ideale* at Nicoletta Rusconi Gallery

19 The intention to expose the process, rather than the final outcome, has been expressed in durational artistic practice since Lucy Lippard's notorious publication, *Six years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972* (1973), in which the process itself is considered far more important than the conclusive result and where the public take an active part in the artistic process.

20 The financial sustainability of *that's contemporary* is not discussed in this thesis. Yet, I have included in the appendix a report briefly describing the relation between the curatorial production of content and the ways in which this content became or not sources of income, sustaining the hybrid exhibitionary spaces of *that's contemporary*.

CHAPTER ONE



Solarkatze was a solo-show by artist Michael Sailstorfer at Zero Gallery. The exhibition's press release stated, 'Sailstorfer transforms ordinary objects taken from everyday life into sculptural works, whose formal qualities nevertheless leave room for fiction. Irony and melancholy, playfulness and aggressiveness mingle in the different works, often resulting in real characters drawn from the personal experience of the artist' (Zero, 2012). In this atmosphere, the exhibition presented a series of ambitious site-specific sculptural works that were conceived to be in dialogue with the gallery space.

The video was filmed during the exhibition-making

process and features interviews with the artist and the gallerist, Paolo Zani, which accompany the production and installation of the sculptures, occurring between the gallery and a gas station. This video opened up the ground for *Hideout*, which is a series of interviews I will discuss later in this chapter that tackled the idea of post-studio artistic production in relation to the distributed exhibition. The video, in fact, highlights how in the realization of a site-specific work, the exhibition is transformed in a studio. In line with the idea of post-studio practice, the space of production of the artwork coincides with the space of its exhibition.

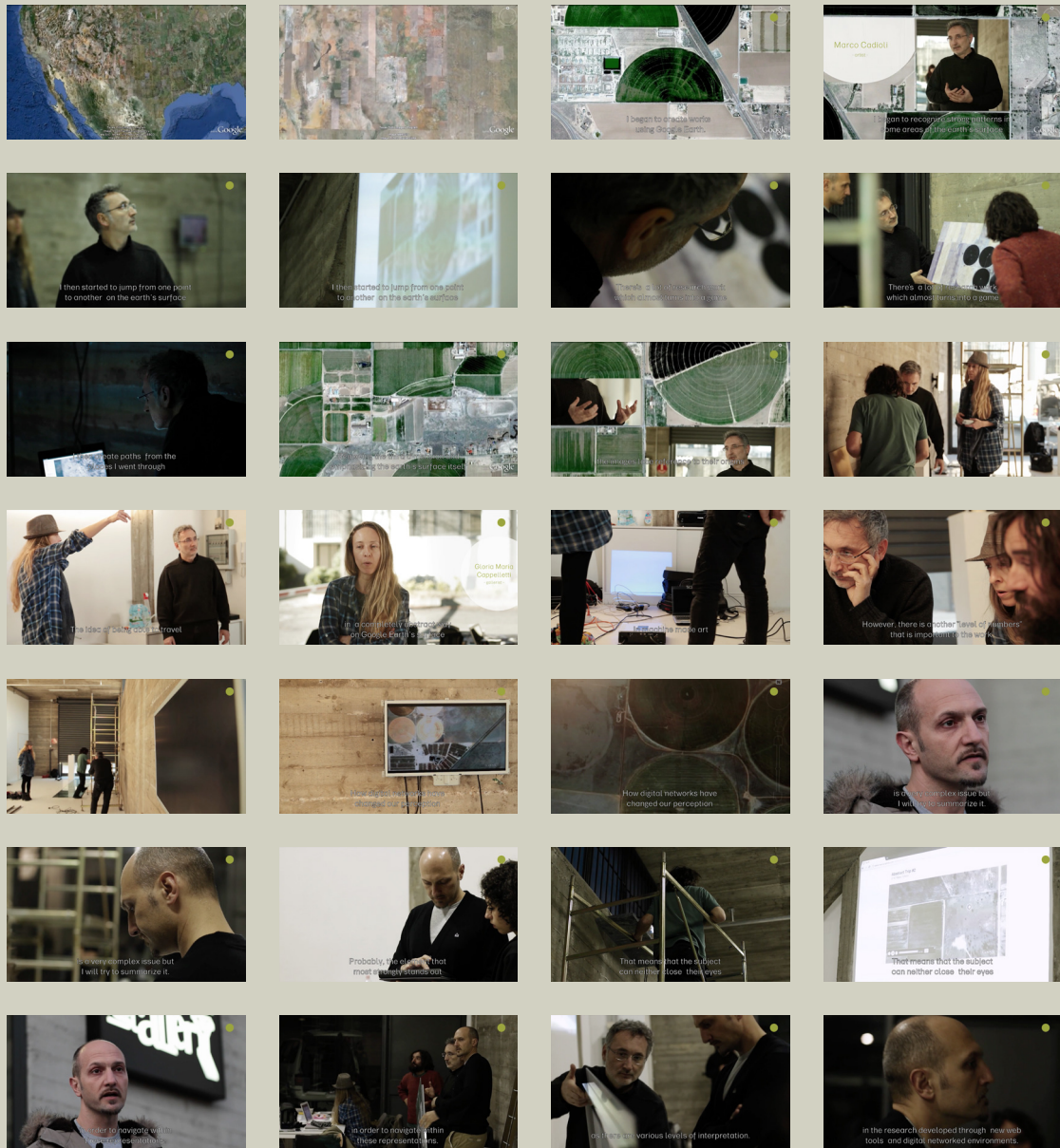


Museo Ideale (in English, Ideal Museum) was a retrospective of artworks from the seventies to the most recent production by artist Franco Guerzoni, presented at Nicoletta Rusconi Gallery. The exhibition gathered together and re-installed an extensive body of works in order to create the 'ideal museum', which can be understood as an attempt to give form to the 'ideal' display of Guerzoni's life-long artistic production. In this sense, the retrospective was formed as a way to re-curate all Guerzoni's past exhibitions within the gallery, which meant assembling different times and spaces and re-contextualizing them in a physical space and in

a present time. Along this line, Museo Ideale became a spatially and temporally distributed exhibition crystallised together at Nicoletta Rusconi gallery.

As with the Solarkatze show, this video aligned with the idea of post-studio practice: in the interview, Guerzoni acknowledges the loss of the artist's studio, traditionally intended as a concealed space for artistic production, and describes the re-construction of artworks for this exhibition along a process that takes place between the studio and the gallery, forming complex relationship between spaces and the other parties of the show, i.e. the gallerist and the public.

CHAPTER ONE



Abstract Journeys was an exhibition by artist Marco Cadioli curated by Vito Campanelli and presented at Gloria Maria Gallery. *Abstract Journeys* (2011) was also the title of Cadioli's video screen capture series from Google Earth, creating abstract geometric compositions by using the terrestrial surfaces and forms obtained by Google's software. Through a series of contributions by the artist, the curator and the gallerist, Gloria Maria Cappelletti, the video discusses how Cadioli uses Google Earth to reproduce objective reality into something else, turning the three-dimensional object of the earth into two-dimensional works that look like abstract paintings.

In this work, Google Earth, along with other interconnected interfaces (i.e. mainly from the Adobe

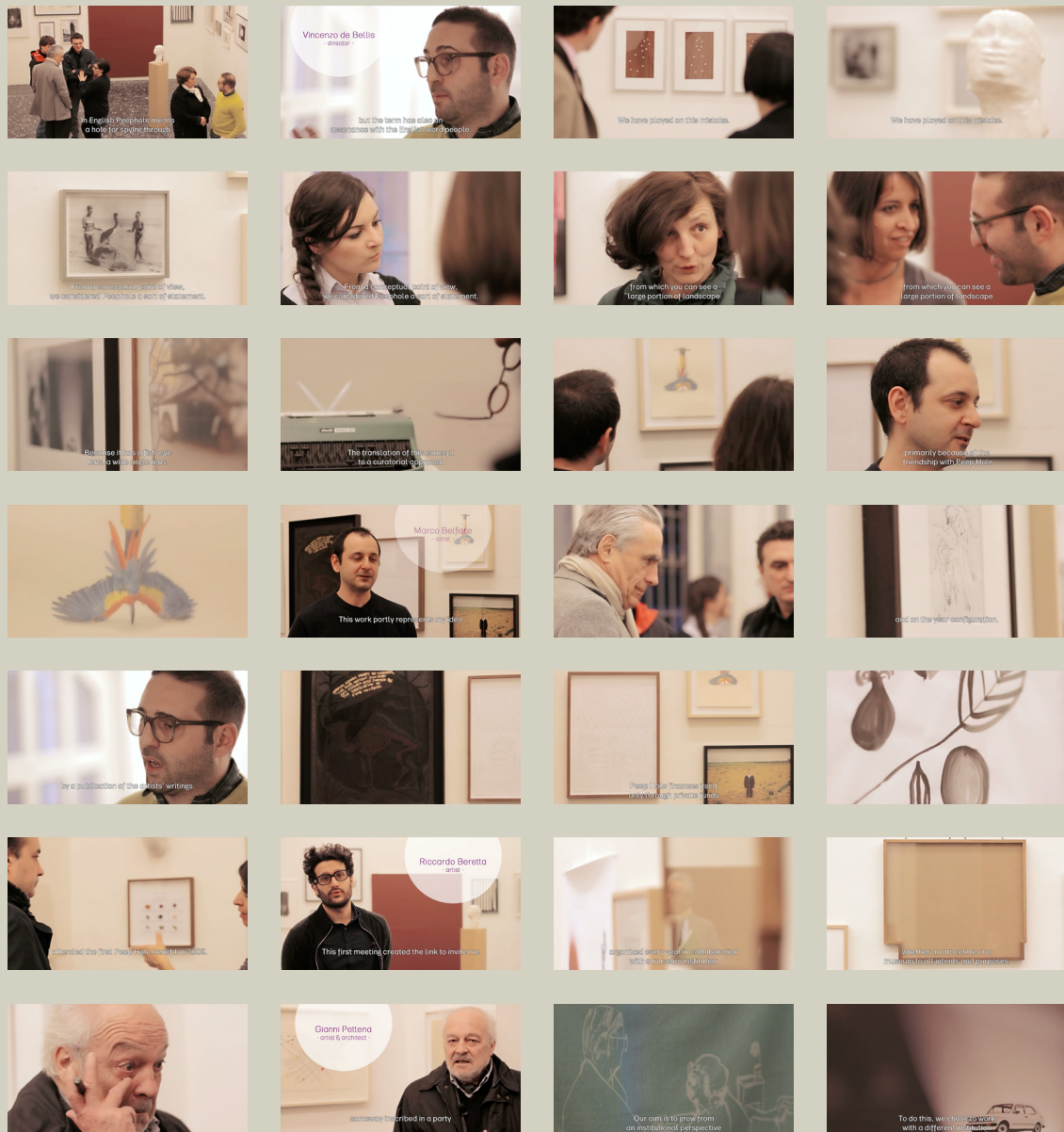
package), becomes the space of Cadioli's artistic production in which a series of 'journeys' are recorded and edited together. The gallery, where the interviews took place, was the physical exhibitionary space in which a group of digital prints - generated by the screen captures of Cadioli's Google Earth videos - were installed, giving a material existence to the digital works. In this video, Cadioli's geometric compositions are utilized as frames for the individual interviews. This way of editing reflects once again the hybrid condition of *Abstract Journeys*' exhibitionary experience. The exhibition started online, took place in a physical gallery and returned online with this video interview that was uploaded on Video thus, now, circulating along digital networks.

MARCO CADIOLI
ABSTRACT JOURNEYS
CURATED BY VITO CAMPANELLI

GLORIA MARIA GALLERY
VIA WATT 32, 20143 MILAN

FROM 26TH JANUARY 2012
UNTIL 22ND FEBRUARY 2012

THE INTERVIEW IS AVAILABLE
WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
HERE: [HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/38357949](https://vimeo.com/38357949)



Take The Leap was the Annual Benefit Exhibition organized by the non-profit space, Peep-Hole. This exhibition presented more than forty artworks, which were donated by Italian and international artists in support of Peep-Hole's annual program. For this occasion, we interviewed the director Vincenzo de Bellis, who described their organization's activities and mission, and also some of the artists who participated in the initiative. In this video, the focus was not so much on the work of the artists and the exhibitionary space was not addressed as the site of the artistic production. Rather, it highlights the curatorial role that Peep-Hole plays in Milan as a platform for the exploration and promotion of contemporary art, also showing the system that supports this activity. The exhibited artworks are presented as allowing the exhibitionary space to exist as such.

The works that appear in the video interview are by the following artists: *Alis/Fillioli, Kathryn Andrews, Pedro Barateiro, Massimo Bartolini, Marco Belfiore, Pavel Büchler, Pierpaolo Campanini, Ludovica Corbotta, Alessandro Ceresoli, Etienne Chabaud, Danilo Correale, Andrew Dadson, Tomaso De Luca, Loredana Di Lillo, Gintaras Didziapetris, Jimmie Durham, Matias Faldbakken, Ettore Favini, Alberto Garutti, Alice Guareschi, Karl Holmqvist, Susanne Kriemann, Andrea Kvas, Renata Lucas, Victor Man, Eva Marisaldi, Fabian Marti, Kris Martin, Elena Narbutaite, Rosalind Nashashibi, Giulio Paolini, J. Parker Valentine, Alessandro Pessoli, Gianni Pettina, Alessandro Piangiamore, Walid Raad, Andrea Romano, Evangelia Spiliopoulou, Mauro Vignando, Danh Vo, Ulla Von Brandenburg, Jordan Wolfson.*

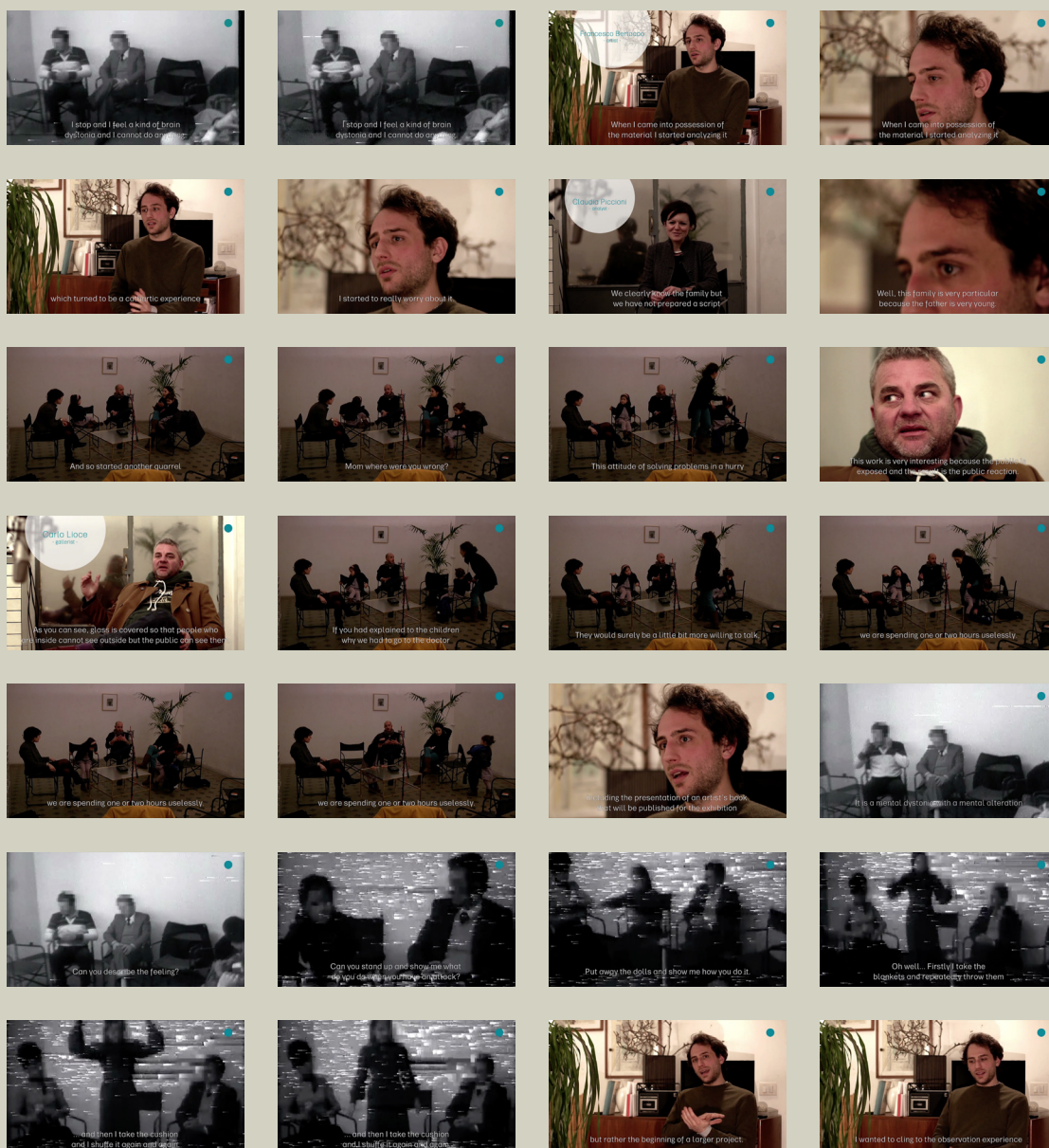
PEEP-HOLE ANNUAL BENEFIT
TAKE THE LEAP

PEEP-HOLE
PORTA VENEZIA
VIA PANFILO CASTALDI 33, 20124
MILAN

FROM 29TH FEBRUARY 2012
UNTIL 24TH MARCH 2012

THE INTERVIEW IS AVAILABLE
WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES AT:
[HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/43422691](https://vimeo.com/43422691)

CHAPTER ONE



Focus Group was an exhibition by artist Francesco Bertocco at Room Gallery, who organized a family therapy's psychoanalytical session for the exhibition's opening evening

The video begins highlighting how Bertocco's exhibition started from a series of mid-80's movies about family group psychoanalysis, reflecting on the centrality of family in the formation of individuals. The video mixes together footage from the psychoanalytical session at Room Gallery, with the mid-80's footage and the interviews with the artist, gallerist and therapist. In this way, the video highlights the more conceptual aspects of the exhibition-making process as well as

showing the footage of the exhibition taking place during the psychoanalytical group session, in which the public is also considered as being part of the psychoanalytical team.

Focus Group – being a durational work and the only work forming this exhibition – demonstrates how the exhibitionary space is a site of production, a production of which the outcome is partially unknown to the artist as it occurs during the therapy session, which is outside of the artist's control. This exhibition is produced between the artist and the users of the exhibition, who are both the family having the therapy and the public functioning as shadow therapists.

FRANCESCO BERTOCCO
FOCUS GROUP

ROOM GALLERY
VIA ALESSANDRO STRADELLA 4,
20129 MILAN

FROM JANUARY 31ST 2012
UNTIL FEBRUARY 24TH 2012

THE INTERVIEW IS AVAILABLE
WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES AT:
[HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/40070896](https://vimeo.com/40070896)

linking them to their corresponding event nodes in the platform²¹.

Unfortunately, after creating five edited videos and a series of negotiations with galleries that aimed to get these interviews commissioned for what we thought was a reasonable amount, we realized that the price that galleries were willing to pay did not match the financial value that we expected for such a considerable amount of work. Thus, the energy needed to create the videos became unfeasible and we had to block the development of *Channel* to rethink a more practical format for producing content.

The distributed studio visit

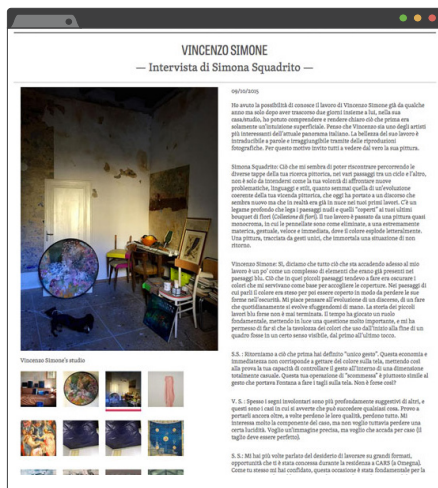
Throughout 2014 and 2015, these video interviews were reconceived into the form of studio visits with artists, curators and practitioners, mostly based in Milan. Rather than videos, these interviews were delivered in a written format and accompanied by a gallery of images published bi-monthly in the exhibitionary section *Hideout*. I created *Hideout* to specifically contain these texts. The title *Hideout* plays with the partly obsolete concept of the artist's studio where creative production is supposed to occur and be hidden from the public. Obviously, *Hideout* contradicts the scope of its semantics. Rather than a place where something – in this case the creative production – is concealed, this section of the platform is occupied with exposing such a process.

The *Hideout* is rooted in the idea of post-studio practice. Since the sixties, with the emergence of site-specific practice and conceptual art, as well as a rejection of the modernist understanding of the artist and the physical artistic act, the idea of the studio, or the *atelier*, became obsolete for the new conditions in which art was being produced²². Today, 'post studio' does not refer to the disappearance of the studio – practitioners obviously still produce in physical working spaces. Rather, the term suggests an expanded concept of the studio, which might be more similar to an office, perhaps a co-working space that is shared with others who do not necessarily need to be involved in the creation of art, but that perhaps work in other creative and semi-creative fields. The studio can function as a 'quasi-exhibition space' as Hoffman (2010) suggests, or it can be a studio but at the same time an artistic residency. As Caitlin Jones (2010) explains, it can also be a mobile laptop computer transported from a kitchen table of a private home to cafes. And, of course, it could be all of these things at the same time. The studio – like the exhibition – is a hybrid space.

Over the last two decades, the legacy of the post-studio has been in fact intensified by the rise of the Internet. In this regard, Caitlin Jones in 'The function of the Studio (When the Studio Is a Laptop)' (2012) questions this semi new situation, '[w]hat happens when the studio in question [...] exists

21 These videos are also available as digital appendix, (n° III)

22 The book edited by Jens Hoffmann, *The Studio* (2010) offers a review of the various ways in which the studio has been interpreted and analyzed from the sixties until now.



Screenshot of the section *Hideout*, with a text I have commissioned, featuring an interview to artist Vincenzo Simone by Simona Squadraro, taken on 1st April, 2016.

in a network space and is linked to countless other studios, shifting the studio experience from ossifying to dynamic? Or when the site of the studio is the same as that of exhibition and distribution?' (Jones, 2012, p. 117)²³ She continues to say that, '[the Internet]' provides an unprecedented platform for sharing and collaboration. The image of the solitary artistic genius is replaced by a more collaborative mode of production' (ibid, p. 118). Jones focuses her article on artists and practitioners whose work specifically has an emphasis on digital and online environments. Nevertheless, it is obvious by now that any creative practice is somehow enveloped in online environments and affected by cooperative processes. Artists, curators, researchers and any other professionals in and outside the arts browse, read wiki pages and blogs, use social media and download images, texts and sound recordings; they publish and share on the Internet. In this

way, even if the work carried out by these Internet users does not directly reflect on these (relatively new) conditions, these conditions can not help it influencing or impacting on their work. In this way, the idea of the studio – understood as the place where art is produced – should be revisited as a distributed space where production happens along networks that are shared and, therefore, that are made (partially or entirely) public. In this sense, the idea of post-studio resumes and meets my understanding of a hybrid exhibitionary space: a space where art is both produced and exhibited and where the authorship of such a double process is shared amongst many users that are at the same producers. While the studio – which was originally the place committed to a semi solitary artistic creation – turns into a space for the dissemination of the work; the exhibition, as I argued beforehand in this thesis, undertakes the inverse path by becoming the space where art is produced along a network of cooperation. In this configuration the function and space of these two entities – the studio and the exhibition – overlap.

In some cases, the studio visits of the *Hideout* have embraced these premises when approaching interviewees, not necessarily through the themes discussed, but more so in the way in which I have carried out studio visits. In this sense, it is feasible to say that if the interviews on *Channel* were addressed to question where and when the exhibition starts, with *Hideout* we placed the question of when art production actually begins and ends under examination. It would be conventionally assumed that the interviewee is the person who holds (in the studio) the means of artistic production and that the interviewer (and visitor to the studio) is the person who takes this artistic knowledge out of the studio and exhibits it. Yet, what I have come to realize more and more

is that the process of production, which has been unveiled in these studio-visit accounts, seems to say more about the 'visits' than the 'studios'. In other words, these occasions turned into a new opportunity for production, which occurred in a dialogue between the interviewers and the interviewees. Still, what is needed to be underlined from the point of view of the interviewer – the curator and visitor to the studio – is the following inquiry: 'how is the 'visitor' supposed to 'visit' a studio that is distributed in a networked space?'

In responding to such question I would like to give a report of the work I conducted with a studio visit to Traslochi Emotivi (translated in English as 'Emotional Movings').

Exhibiting the 'visit'

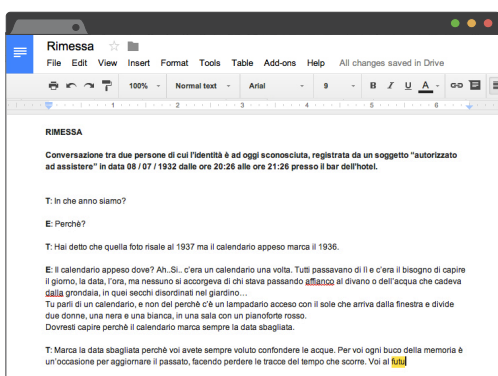
Traslochi Emotivi is an on-going artistic project that is directed by an undeclared number of individuals and to which a wide range of practitioners and enthusiasts occasionally contribute. The exhibitionary forms via which it usually manifests and disseminates have, over time, taken different formats and occupied various times and spaces. For this reason, given that Traslochi Emotivi is itself a distributed and dynamic enterprise, my 'visit' was inevitably temporally and spatially distributed. The dispersion of the visit increased by the fact that the interviewer – me – also inhabits a productive space that is networked. Indeed, I consider myself as working in Milan, despite the fact that I am physically based in London the majority of the time. Although I visit Milan very regularly in my daily experience, I perceive Milan more as a cultural and social space that I digitally inhabit, rather than a physical urban setting. Yet, I am conscious that in my work, what I essentially do is to extend the hybrid space that Milan occupies via producing a network of exhibitionary interfaces. I read, write, chat, tweet, email, post about Milan all the time by producing, editing and uploading information onto platforms. I send instructions delegating other users/producers that operate in Milan or that, even though they are located somewhere else, their actions somehow, to differing degrees, effect on the informational space of Milan. Therefore, my 'studio' was as much distributed as the studio of my interviewee. This condition impacted on the way we conducted the studio



In 2013, Camden Town Unlimited granted me with free access to a co-working space for emerging creative entrepreneurs, named The Collective. In 2014, Giulia and I were accepted onto a business incubation program run by Polytechnic of Milan, helping creative professionals to temporarily develop their projects abroad with the guide of an organization able to provide mentoring support, providing a grant of up to €15,000. Giulia and I proposed The Collective as a supporting partner and both worked together for a period of three months in London, taking advantage of The Collective's tutors and community. I, in particular, have worked in a regular basis from The Collective, and therefore remotely from Milan, for over two years.



Screenshot of the section *Hideout* featuring the dialogue between Traslochi Emotivi and myself, taken on the 1st April, 2016.



👉 Conversation between two people whose identity is unknown to date, recorded by an individual 'authorised to assist' on 08/07/1932 from 8:26 p.m. to 9:26 p.m. at the hotel bar.

T: What year is it?

E: Why?

T: You said that the photo dates back to 1937 but the calendar on the wall shows that it is 1936. [...] You should understand why the calendar always shows the wrong date.

T: It shows the wrong date because you have always wanted to cloud the issue. For you every hole in a memory is an opportunity to modify the past, losing track of the flowing time. (AN EXTRACT TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY DOROTA GLANC AND ANNA WILK FROM THE TEXT RIMESSA)

NEXT PAGE: Traslochi Emotivi's exhibition installation *Rimessa* at Canepaneri Gallery in September 2015 and related publication by Traslochi Emotivi and I. This publication is the result of the temporarily and spatially distributed studio-visit that hosted a conversation between Traslochi Emotivi and myself.

visit. From the decision to publish a piece on Traslochi Emotivi, to the actual publication on the platform, my 'visit' was scattered over a temporal span of three months. It took place in Traslochi Emotivi's physical studio, Casa Cicca (which is, often used as exhibition space as well) and along a series of interfaces such as phone calls, Skype calls, *whatsapp*, Facebook chats and the Google Document where we simultaneously, but remotely, wrote together the text that I will discuss below. In this sense, I consider this studio-visit to be an interconnection between two sites of production – the linkage of two networked working spaces.

For this reason, the intention was not to stick to the format of the interview but to unfold a conversation over time. Yet, this conversation was shaped by the ways in which online social networking platforms organize communication. After a series of emails, our formal conversation – or, better said, the portion that we agreed to make public – started during a video-call on Skype in which we began to type a conversation in a shared word document on Google Drive while commenting on the conversation that we were forming. This dialogue then continued over the summer – between June and August 2015 – via email, *whatsapp* and Facebook Messenger. Quotes, audio recordings, photos, drawings and emoticons enriched our interchange. Yet, rather than an analysis of the work of Traslochi Emotivi, the text immediately turned into more of a fictional piece aimed to intensify the ambiguity through which Traslochi Emotivi manifests itself. Temporal referents and places where our encounters occurred were maintained confused and in contradiction. Genders and identities – of both interviewee and interviewers – were omitted and blurred. For example, the initials used to distinguish the two parties taking part to the conversation are 'T' and 'E', which are the initials of Traslochi Emotivi. In doing so, I have stated that for the time of the 'visit' I was somehow part of Traslochi Emotivi as well. Because this expanded studio visit arose in such a digitalized environment, it was easy to trace it back and connect it to other Traslochi Emotivi's projects, which I have contributed to the past as well curated within the framework of *that's contemporary*²⁴. 🐙

In this sense, as I discussed before, the 'visit' became

24 See appendix VI for the entire text, *Rimessa* (2015) by Traslochi Emotivi and Francesca Baglietto.



the space of production between two studios but also an opportunity for being *exhibited*. The visit was what bound the studio to the exhibition. The traces that we left along this dialogue became the material that Traslochi Emotivi used in *Rimessa*, an exhibition hosted and supported by the gallery Canepaneri in Milan in September 2015. *Rimessa*, conceived as a type of retrospective, was literally the staging of Traslochi Emotivi's studio according to the loose script of 'the visit'. As a part of the exhibition, the dialogue was published in a booklet and shown through hanging A1 sheets on the gallery's walls so that visitors could read the text while walking through the space. The exhibition was inaugurated the day of the online release of the dialogue on the section *Hideout*. Traslochi Emotivi's studio visit has been stored in the database as an article node along with the other studio visits. It was also linked to the event node of the platform *Rimessa* and a new place node, the gallery Canepaneri, was entered.

NETWORKS OF INTERFACES

What I have described so far are the hybrid exhibitionary networks that the interface *thatscontemporary.com* unfolds within itself. Yet, as explained in the introduction, exhibitionary experiences unfold along networks of interfaces. The mechanism of directing users to other interfaces is a practice that is recursive in *thatscontemporary.com*. For example, a list of links to online magazines is featured on the homepage as well as a number of banners linking to other platforms we have developed or that we are partnered with, which appear in both homepage and in the section *About*. Also, in each place node there are links to the website of the art place and its contacts. Yet, this mechanism of enlarging the exhibitionary experience is expressed and curated within the sub-section *Let's Read*.

Let's Read occasionally appears in an event node and contains interlinks to other exhibitionary nodes such as reviews, interviews, dossiers and other texts that are topic related. These exhibitionary nodes are sometimes entries located in other sections of *thatscontemporary.com* such as *Hideout*, but most of the time they are pieces of information sited on other interfaces that are not under my and Giulia's curatorial control. Through these links, users are re-directed to other nodes on the web in which the exhibitionary experience pauses over to other interconnected interfaces and spaces.

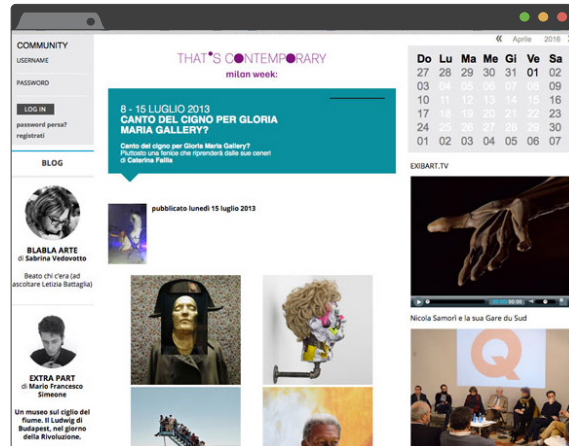
In this configuration it is necessary to highlight again the separation between the exhibitionary platform *thatscontemporary.com*, which entails the exhibitionary space enclosed within one interface, and the exhibitionary space of *that's contemporary* that expands along a network of interfaces.

The operation of curating *that's contemporary* beyond the confines of the interface *thatscontemporary.com* became more evident in 2013. We agreed with the Italian magazine *Exibart* to create a weekly column on the homepage of their website along with two pages on their trimestral paper magazine in which *that's contemporary* would have reviewed event nodes

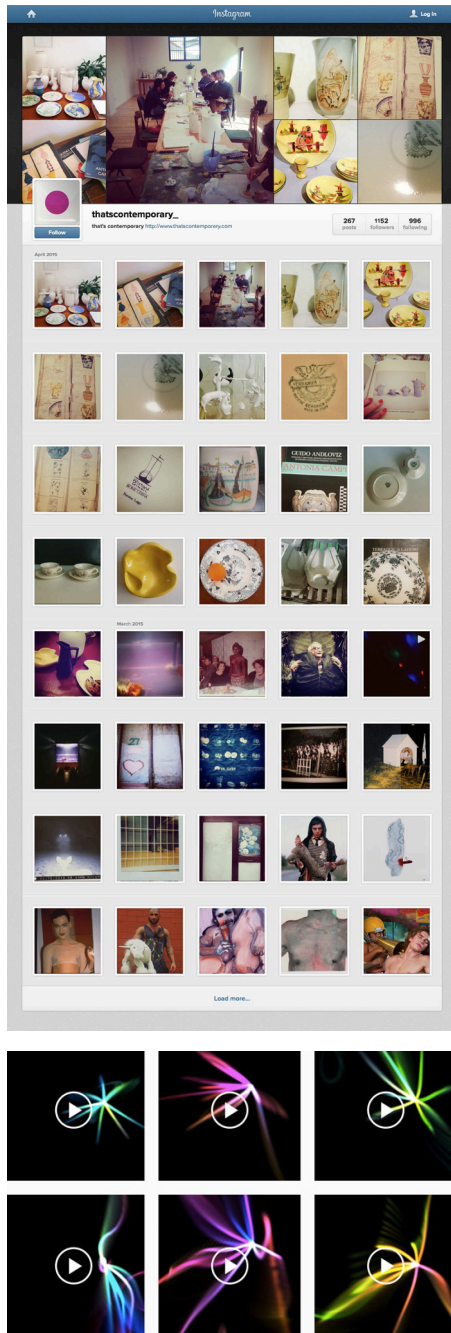
featured on thatscontemporary.com. Reviews were followed by a small statement about *that's contemporary*, links to thatscontemporary.com and to our related mobile app, *That's App* on iTunes Store and Google Store where it is downloadable. The aim of linking two platforms' activity was so that Exibart's users would learn about *that's contemporary* through reading its curated content on Exibart and were then redirected to *that's contemporary's* platform. The agreement established with Exibart shows how, in a networked art scene, the relationship amongst 'competitors' change. Instead of working as rivals, forms of non-financial trade such as an unpaid production of content in exchange for visibility become acceptable and relevant opportunities to increase popularity amongst users.

Our practice of reviewing – of providing contextual, theoretical and critical accounts of artworks or events – started in 2012 before our partnership with Exibart. It was, in fact, scripted into the initial matrix (✕ attribute scripted in: performance / useful, '*Producing interviews and reviews*'). I planned with Giulia the creation of a series of reviews in the sub-section *That's Pick*. The 'pick' was a short review about a weekly selected event node, which would then be published within its profile. A 'flag' on both dot indicators on the map and image boxes on the grid, highlighted these picked event nodes. In this sense, a *That's Pick* was not a node itself but it was integrated within an event node with the aim that users would be encouraged to physically visit these selected spaces. *That's Pick* was written by myself or by the editor in charge of contents during that specific period.

In 2014, we decided to produce content directly on our exhibitionary spaces with the objective of increasing our user base across our interfaces. The energy spent on *That's Pick* and the reviews on Exibart was reallocated on the curation of social media. In fact, an integral part of curating the exhibitionary space of *that's contemporary* meant to take care of its accounts on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (since October 2011), Vimeo and YouTube (since March 2012) and Instagram (since December 2014). We also opened a Google account that we initially used as a social media outlet – Google+ – to improve the visibility of *that's contemporary* in Google searches. Since 2014, each platform has been daily curated according to individual scripts. On Facebook, I share information about art in Milan and usually make three 'picks' per week amongst the event nodes and place nodes of the platform, posting a short account of each node with a link directing users to their entries on thatscontemporary.com. I have instituted a weekly post, *Art of The Week*



Screenshot of Milan Week page of *that's contemporary*, the column of reviews on the online magazine exibart.it, taken on 1st April, 2016.



The Instagram account of *that's contemporary* and the screenshot of the video posts uploaded by the artist Lia Cecchin on the Instagram account for *Il Testimone*, taken on 1st April, 2016.

where I select an event node and change the dashboard image of *that's contemporary's* pages on Facebook. On Twitter, in addition to tweeting about event nodes that are about to open or end in Milan, I also tweet about events and news that are not geographically limited to the area of Milan. I follow and re-tweet other *tweeters* with who *that's contemporary* might share networks of hash-tags and followers.

My curatorial activity on social media, in this case, takes place under the name of *that's contemporary* as a professional occupation, resuming what I have described in the introduction about the conflation of work and play caused by the transformation of the 'non-work curatorial tasks' of social networking into digital labor. What I have noticed is that the ways I curate content on my personal social media accounts has become increasingly similar to the modes I curate on the *that's contemporary's* social media accounts. The informality of the language as well as the elusiveness and inconsistency of the selection criteria in choosing and contextualizing artworks, art places or artists, which I earlier described as being expressed as 'unprofessionalized curating', are qualities that have been increasingly absorbed in the modes of curating *that's contemporary's* presence on these social media interfaces. This shows that, whether, in the logic of experience-based social networking, the 'play time' has been transformed into digital labor, it is also true that the 'professionalized labor of curating' is increasingly similar to amateur curating activities. This illustrates again how the figure of the curator and the user, in their task of curating contents, is progressively becoming indistinguishable.

In December 2014, after joining *that's contemporary* as a news editor, curator Simona Squadrito, suggested launching a new Instagram account with a residency program to take place online for artists and curators. After we accepted her idea, Simona started to use Instagram as a concrete exhibitionary space that artists and curators, who she had selected would use to share their images and videos. Each artist and curator curated the Instagram account for a period of eleven days by sharing a range of visual and audio materials. I curated a repository of hash-tags and directed Simona to check that the transitory curators of the account used the relevant hash-tags so that images would be fed in as many appropriate networks as possible. We named this program *Il Testimone*, for which

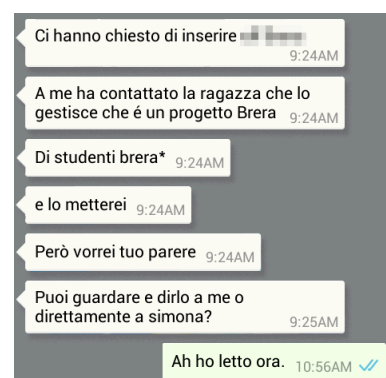
the literal English translation is ‘the witness’. In Italian, ‘testimone’ also refers to the baton that team members in a relay race pass on to each other when taking turns in running or swimming thus referring to an unfolding network passing from one node to another. Rather than exposing a flow of information authored by one curatorial subjectivity, the single account of *that’s contemporary* became an outlet of a collective curatorial subject, expressing multiple and dissimilar voices, which sometimes also conflicted with my own taste.

In addition to social media, there are other platforms that we do not entirely provide open access to the public but, that are still available to some users. For example, since 2012, I have used Google for *that’s contemporary*, not only as a social media and analytical tool, but also as a synchronized workspace where we collaboratively write and edit documents that are then stored online (Google Drive). Therefore, while Google+ is potentially open to everyone, files on Google Drive are kept private for a narrow number of users and collaborators, who are usually the people I have worked with along the making-process of the exhibitionary space. The closure of these exhibitionary spaces for some users is dependent on their affiliation to *that’s contemporary* and their ascribed tasks, a subject that I will further develop in the second chapter. There are also other platforms that are not social media but that have functioned as restricted exhibitionary spaces: Mailchimp, which inboxes newsletters just to our subscribers (since October 2011); Dropbox where all *that’s contemporary*’s documents are stored and shared with a limited and selected number of collaborators (since January 2012) and Hootsuite where I curate social media platforms by programming the release of contents in advance (since April 2013).

Still, depending on partnerships or commercial agreements with other organizations, I might post and tweet on *that’s contemporary*’s social media about events, services and products for which *that’s contemporary* receives other forms of communication or services in turn (in case of partnerships) or if it is financially remunerated (in case of commercial agreements)²⁵.

NETWORKS OF VALUES

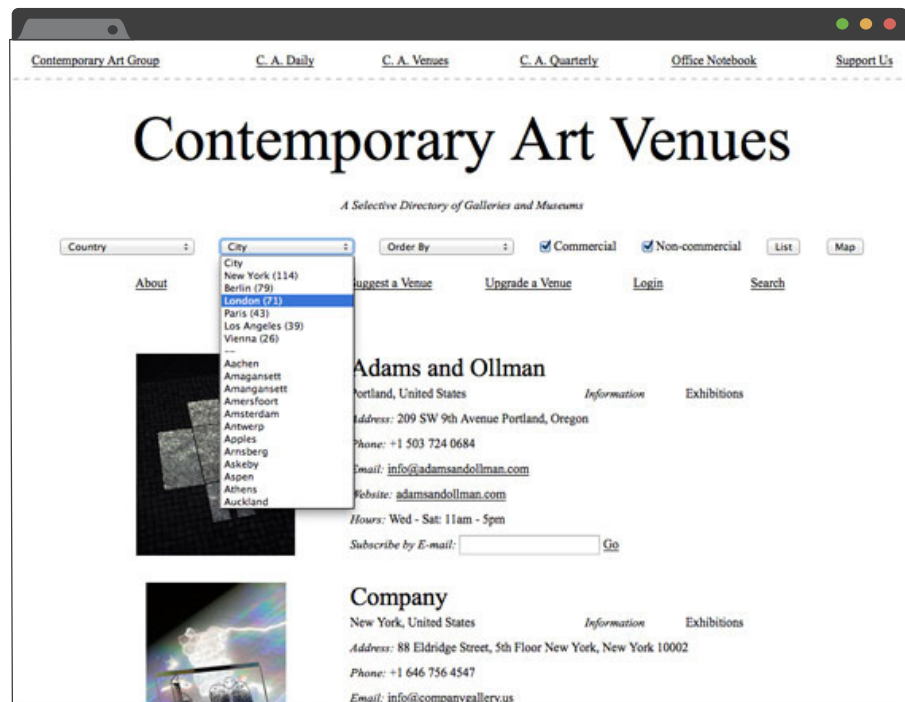
From the beginning, Giulia and I agreed that the inclusion of place nodes – that, as discussed before, represent a physical art place – had to remain as invitation only and free (✕) attribute scripted: in performance / necessary, ‘*Membership maintained free and upon invitation. We only include what we*



Conversation amongst myself, Giulia and Simona Squadrito to make a decision about the inclusion of an art place for thatscontemporary.com.

25 See appendix VII for the commercial relationships Giulia and I established to financially support our hybrid exhibitionary spaces.

Screenshot of a page listing art venues taken from the platform Contemporary Art Daily, on 5th March, 2016.



like’). On the one hand, the decision of inviting was curatorial, we wanted to include places in order to support the expansion of the exhibitionary network via adopting a selective approach rather than an all-inclusive one. On the other hand, the abolition of a fee was made because we thought that it could have compromised our decision making for inclusion or blocked affiliations with some place nodes because it would have constituted a financial impediment. Removing the payment of fees seemed the only way to operate according to an egalitarian logic, moving away from a ‘pay and display’ system of symbolic valorisation, which other art-related networks in Milan, such as Start Milano and then Milan Art Bulletin had abided by. Nevertheless, soon, we realized that this aim for egalitarianism was, at the least, partially contradictory because the process of selection was inevitably contingent to the mechanisms of validation characterizing the art field (which, I will discuss later in this section), as well as our own taste. This contradiction emerged as cogently as the attempt to advocate for horizontality and inclusion into a progressively more comprehensive set of exclusions. A similar platform, Contemporary Art Daily – that instead of focusing on a specific urban area, makes a selection on a global scale – expresses this contingency for inclusion in its ‘About’ page where it states what follows:

Contemporary Art Daily is an international directory of galleries, museums, and other public venues exhibiting contemporary art. Compiled by the editorial staff of Contemporary Art Daily, the directory is selective rather than all-inclusive. [...] Inclusion in the directory is made at the sole discretion of the editorial staff. The criteria used to make determinations about inclusion are complicated and ultimately subjective. (**CONTEMPORARY ART DAILY, 2016**)

In a similar fashion, the selection Giulia and I carried out has inevitably been affected by our friendships and those mechanisms of power that are symbolically, culturally and materially generated, which are continuously legitimized by an interplay of agencies and hierarchical structures that are implicit within the art field – which, I suppose, is what Contemporary Art Daily designates in its statement as ‘complicated’.

These mechanisms have appeared and impacted on *that's contemporary* since the initial research and selection of place nodes between September and November 2011, when Giulia and I carried out a series of physical and online expeditions to commercial galleries and non-profits and gradually compiled a list of art places, which we ranked according to the type of values that we assumed each place could pass to our platform. I will explain what I refer with values in a moment. This list, which clustered commercial galleries into three sub-groups according to their ‘degree of reputation’, was expressing an index assessing galleries on the basis of: the recognition of the artists they show and their affiliations with renowned curators and organizations; on their participation in art fairs; on the number of reviews and texts published about their exhibition projects; but also simply on the allure of the gallery spaces and the exhibitions when we visited them. For example, an exhibition review in a recognized magazine was an indicator for us to assess a gallery as ‘valuable’ and a potential worthy place node to incorporate within *that's contemporary's* exhibitionary network. Giulia and I excluded non-profits from this ranking and considered that working without a profitable objective was by itself a respectful commitment and an indicator of value.

Affiliating a new place node onto *that's contemporary* meant adding their reputation to the perceived value of the platform. In this logic, the more valuable place nodes we included into the network, the more the network would grow and be perceived as important. The presence of art places to our network that were commonly recognized within the scene as valuable became a factor we used to persuade other place nodes to affiliate. In other words, through using the legitimacy of place nodes we constructed our own legitimacy and also the reason for others to take part. By relating to valuable place nodes via *that's contemporary*, less well-known place node would boost their own reputation.

This mechanism of value/reputation making is embraced in the concept of ‘cultural intermediary’ coined in Pierre Bourdieu's text *Distinction* (1979). Cultural intermediaries are ‘tastemakers’ in a type of economy that requires the production of consuming tastes and dispositions. In this economy, what is produced are not only the goods or services at the disposal of users, but also the will and need that push users to want them. Drawing upon Bourdieu's concept, Jennifer Smith-Maguire and Julian Matthews in ‘Are We All Cultural Intermediaries Now?’ (2012) write that these cultural intermediaries:

Screenshot of Facebook page for the event, *Fanta Festa*



[C]onstruct value, by framing how others – end consumers, as well as other market actors including other cultural intermediaries – engage with goods, affecting and effecting others' orientation towards those goods as legitimate – with 'goods' understood to include material products as well as services, ideas and behaviours. **(SMITH MAGUIRE AND MATTHEWS, 2012, P. 552)**

The concept of cultural intermediaries resumes the theory mentioned in the introduction that production is only production when it is completed in consumption, or in my terminology, usership. This because use produces the will for other to use. In this thesis, cultural intermediaries are actors or nodes that function as indicators of reputational legitimacy. In a networked configuration, they can be defined as value nodes, which produce, and are produced by, categories of cultural legitimacy.

Now, I would like to add to the growth of complexities abound in the process of validation of place nodes. After the initial round of inclusion, we started to consider other indicators of legitimacy in relation to the way that digital exhibitionary technologies allow such indicators to actually operate their own process of validation. In fact, I progressively recognized that actors of legitimization – value nodes – need to reach users in order to influence their estimation of value. Liz McFall's argument in 'The Problem of Cultural Intermediaries in the Economy of Qualities' (2014) is to move attention from individual actors of legitimization as an entity taken on their own to a 'distributed, crowded network of intermediaries who, in different ways, contribute to the qualification of products' (ibid, p. 50). In line with this, I have noticed that actors of legitimization – such as the exhibition review in a magazine that I mentioned beforehand – are also value nodes that accrue reputation along

networks of interfaces.

The ability of social media platforms to boost symbolic value is proven by the influence that they have on my judgment when picking an exhibition to visit, as shown with Ai Weiwei's show, but also when deciding about the inclusion or not of place nodes on *thatscontemporary.com*.

I would like to show an example of this process of legitimization by retracing the social media presence of *Fanta*, a non-profit that opened in Milan in 2015. On their Facebook page, they posted a blog entry with an interview by an influential Italian art blogger, Elena Bordinon from *Art, Text & Pics*. Inevitably an interview by this particular art blogger affects users' value judgment about *Fanta*, including mine in the process of selection. This interview is an indicator of value thanks to the reputation that *Art, Text & Pics* has accumulated, which is also expressed in the blog's growing network of tweets, re-tweets, likes, shares and comments. The more durable the exhibitionary network of value judgments of this interview, the stronger the credibility of the interview becomes as an indicator of legitimacy. In this sense, the divide between node place, blogger and users in the production of value becomes trivial since users are able to most powerfully validate the popularity of the node place by functioning as a 'qualifier' of the interview. Another form of validation that I have applied to assess the popularity of *Fanta*'s opening evening was through the use of a Facebook event. For instance, the number of 'users going' – which in Facebook's terminology refers to users participating in an event – or 'users interested' in the opening evening, functioned as indicators of legitimization, by proving the popularity of the event. Yet, it was not only the quantity of users, which validated the event, but also the amount of 'qualities' that each users' profile carries. The high number of (art) users – recognizable artists, curators, and art professionals – that flagged *Fanta*'s Facebook event with 'going' turned the Facebook event into a network of value nodes qualifying *Fanta* via an accumulation of indicators demonstrating individual professional endeavours, affiliations and friendships, which even though they might exist and be formed during offline interactions, seem to get further institutionalization along these online social activities. The result is that the online presence of these hybrid users have collectively produced *Fanta*'s reputation, which in turn determined the inclusion of the place nodes on *thatscontemporary.com*.

This new configuration suggests a model in which art is instituted in, borrowing Pascal Gielen's expression, a 'flattened world', in which anyone can have an opinion about the quality of an artwork, artist or art place – which, can



that's contemporary's team meeting in Careof Docva Viafarini in Milan in 2012. The opportunity to use this Italian well-known contemporary art archive as *that's contemporary's* main office became a form of legitimization for the whole project.

be expressed either with a blog post, a tweet or a simple 'thumbs up' (Gielen, 2013). For Gielen, in this arena, the only hierarchy that dominates is that of numbers, or quantities. In his introduction to his edited text, *Institutional Attitudes: Instituting Art in a Flat World* (2013), he writes:

[Q]ualities are expressed in terms of quantity, making any quality interchangeable with, or at least comparable to, any other quality. This belief in a measurable society is constantly transmuting qualities into quantities. [...] In such a flattened world, art institutions are finding it hard to survive. After all institutions traditionally represent verticality, historic profundity, canons, tradition, values and dignity, 'grandeur', stability, and certainty. Within the fluent network society, these qualities too are subjected to being expressed in terms of measurable quantities by measuring output and public outreach and by counting the number of organized events. (GIELEN, 2013, P. 2)

Gielen pictures a scenario in which this networked and flattened arena is entrenched into an ideal of democratization of art, where any form of verticality is abandoned. The longstanding qualities of legitimization listed by Gielen that are inherent within the power relationships of the art field are now affected by mechanisms of validation in which qualities are relative to the number of users validating them. The position of *that's contemporary* in relation to this configuration is dialogical as on the one side, as explained beforehand, the platform runs via a mechanism that is governed by a type of 'quantity', which is 'activity'. *thatscontemporary.com*, in fact, recognizes and computes activity as the number of event nodes hosted by each place node. In other words, the more event nodes are organized by the same place node, the more visibility that place node receives. On the other side, the reification of taste – that might be operated by inequalities such as the disparity of media exposure that art places, exhibitions or artists might receive outside of *thatscontemporary.com* – is immobilized once art places (along with the artworks and artists they represent) are selected and inserted within the horizontal framework of the platform, allocating equal attention to each event node.

My research acknowledges the 'shadows' of curating across interfaces that lie in the paradoxes that are intrinsic into the sharing economy and the quest for a horizontal model. Despite this awareness, when I co-founded *that's contemporary*, the interest was not to challenge the rules governing new models offered by digital networks. Oppositely, the objective was to learn and deploy them in the creation of hybrid exhibitionary spaces able to engage with larger and different publics with varying degrees of knowledge of art and expectations. Because I wanted to operate on this scale, I had to absorb and take on board with the systems of the digital attention economy; this created the opportunity

for *that's contemporary* to become known, valued and, therefore, influence the user experience of art in Milan.

SECOND CHAPTER

THAT'S APP — THE RISE OF THE (EXHIBITION) USER AND THE MOBILE EXHIBITION

98

CHAPTER OVERVIEW — This chapter analyzes the development of That's App, a mobile application device (app) which acts as the portable version of thatscontemporary.com. It is divided into two sections according to the distinction made in the introduction between (1) the exhibition as imagined by its initial authors and inscribed in the structure of the interface and (2) the exhibition in use, which I refer to with the term 'exhibitionary'. Both sections of the chapter aim to bring to the fore the role of the 'exhibition user'; who is examined as a 'scripted user' in the first part of the chapter or as an 'actual user' in the second part. This concept of use becomes key to understand the mobile exhibition as engendered via a collective experience occurring in a hybrid and networked space.

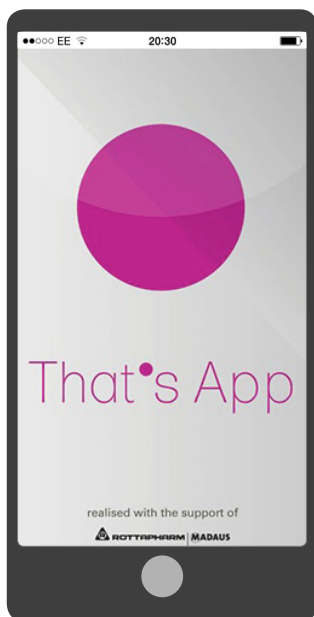
In the first section, I will provide an account of the app's development under the condition of mobility that portable devices produce. This addition to the *that's contemporary* model provided two main innovations to my conception of hybrid exhibitionary space: 'exhibitor nodes' and 'user nodes'. Exhibitor nodes are an extension developed because of the possibility of physically navigating single event nodes while being guided by the mobile interface. In other words, they are an additional level of curation within the event node. Differently, the user nodes formed an additional faction of actors participating in the process of exhibition-making. The introduction of user nodes will be instrumental for understanding the three exhibitionary paradigms I want to propose, which are related to Stephen Wright's notion of *usership* (2007, 2013) and to a revamped approach to the category of users. Firstly, the notion of user will be adapted to the subject of this thesis and referred to as 'exhibition user' as a key element for delineating the use-value of the exhibition. Secondly, I will suggest how I have reconceived the hybrid exhibition as a social space that is created by a multiplicity of users. I will suggest to read this formation through the Wright's term, UIT 'Use It Together' (2013). Thirdly, drawing on some of the designs for the app I could not fully realize, I will show how a collective use of the hybrid exhibitionary space engenders not one exhibition but a multiplicity of exhibitions that are as many as there are partaking users.

In the second part of this chapter, I will perform two hypothetical user nodes, Ann and Giacomo, who are using, while at the same time producing, the exhibition in accordance to the concept of network curation as highlighted in the introduction. In the first chapter the exhibitionary was performed through

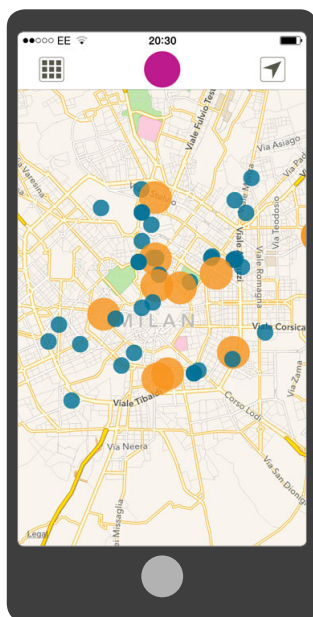
tracing actual uses within the interface as reported by analytical tools, then translated into the fictional user, Ann. Whereas, in this second chapter, I will attempt to trace the exhibitionary beyond the digital space of the interface. To carry out this endeavour, I will use the notion of 'networked space' (Kennedy, 2012) resuming Actor Network Theory as a method for describing an exhibition as a result of converged contexts that are both offline and online. In this chapter, the user interaction with the exhibition is considered beyond the digital interface. Users interact at a hybrid level, between the exhibitionary script addressed in the digital interface and the physical experience that such a script enables. To achieve this, I will trace Ann and Giacomo as they use That's App and portray them in two phases which I will refer to as 'ascribe script' (or 'ascription') and 'performed script'. While ascription refers to the users' operation of assigning a program of actions onto the app's script, performed script alludes to the moment in which such a program is actually enacted. Specifically, I will explore the enactment of the script through the phenomenological approach that Kennedy's 'networked space' proposes, in which the performed script is unveiled along an 'intersection of interactions' (Kennedy, 2012) traversing the plurality of *contexts* that users simultaneously inhabit. Exploring this pathway will result in a type of ANT chain of delegations passing through a collective of distributed actors.

Finally, through comparing my understanding of script to Henry Lefebvre's spatial triad (1991), I will focus on Giacomo's use of one event node. Here, I will show an example of how user nodes enlarge the exhibitionary space, connecting nodes to other nodes through use.

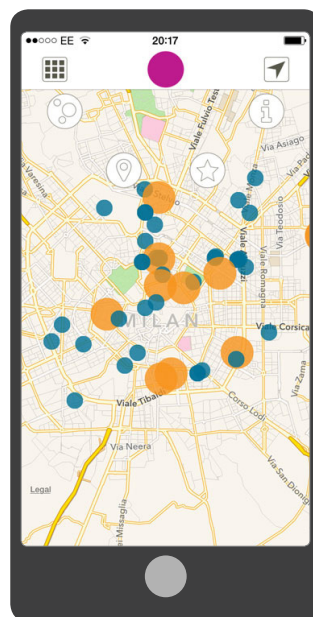
THAT'S APP



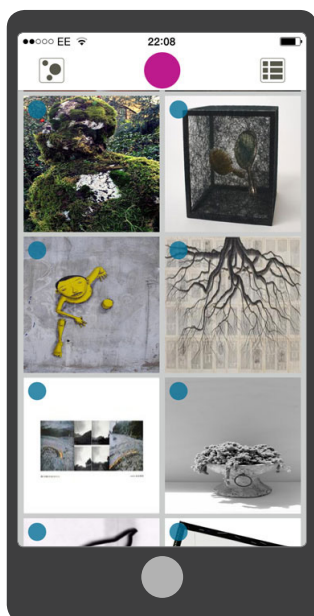
Cover page



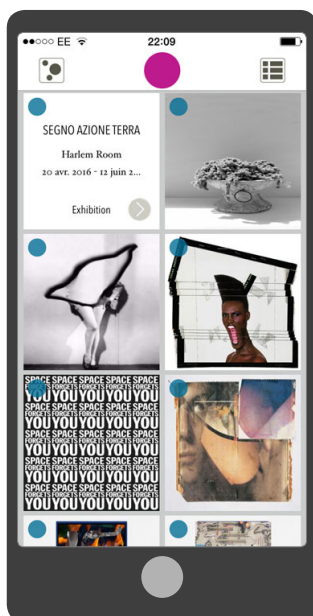
Events - map view, homepage



Menu - Events, Places, Favorites and Info



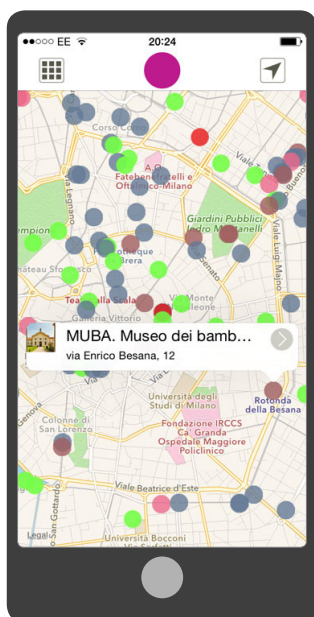
Events - grid view



Events - grid view



Events - list view



Places - map view



Event node - individual page



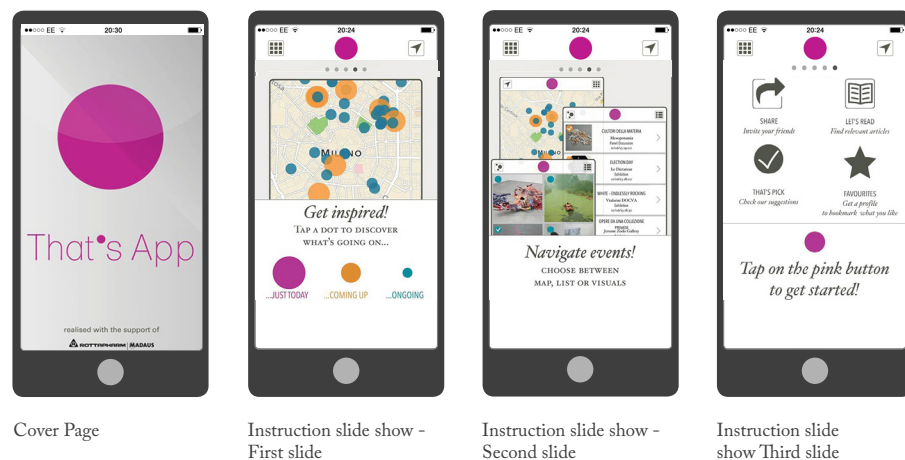
Event node - individual page

FIRST PART: DESIGNING THE MOBILE EXHIBITION

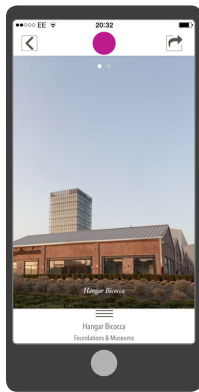
THE EXHIBITION IN MOBILITY

That's App was created by Giulia, Andrea and I with the software developer Luca Corti, between February 2012 and October 2013. Luca joined *that's contemporary* for the creation of the mobile app in 2013 but then he contributed to entire project. The first release of That's App was in April 2013 with the iOS version. An Android version was launched in October 2013 with the collaboration of the app developer Stefano Fattorusso¹. Both platform and app share the same database and trace the same exhibitionary networks, maintaining an equal relationship between the nodes throughout both the sections *Events* and *Places*. Although the ways the app and platform exhibit event nodes and place nodes correspond, information in the app is organized slightly differently to fit into the smaller screen of mobile interfaces.

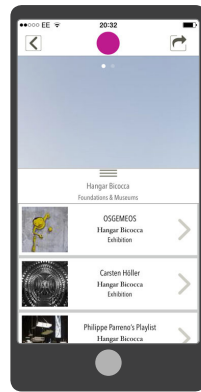
In order to examine use of the app thoroughly, I will provide a brief account of how it functions. In the homepage, there are the event nodes displayed in the form of dot indicators pinned onto an interactive map. These dot indicators change colour and size in relation to the starting and ending date of the event nodes according to the data stored in the database. Clicking on the top right button, it is possible to change the organization of event nodes and visualize them in two other ways: a grid or in a textual list (this differs to the platform where the three structures are organized in the same layout). In both these structures, event nodes are chronologically ordered. Tapping on an event node, users are directed to their individual page, providing the same material displayed on the platform: opening and closing dates and times, correlating events, an excerpt from the press release, images depicting the event node and, if available, a *That's Pick* along with the interlinks of the section *Let's Read*. From the event node, users can tap and move to the profile of the host of the event



1 That's App is available on the Apple Store at the link: <https://itunes.apple.com/app/thats-app/id624341746?mt=8&ign-mpt=uo%3D4> and on the Google Play Store at the link: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.thatscontemporary.android.thatsapp> (I accessed to both links on the 3rd July 2016). In case the app will not be available, a video screen capture of the That's App in use is available as digital appendix, n° V.



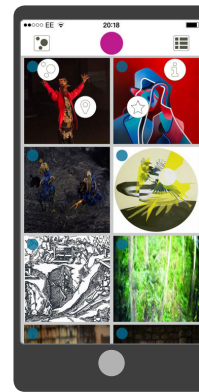
Place node
– individual page



Place node
– individual page with
archive of event nodes



Share options



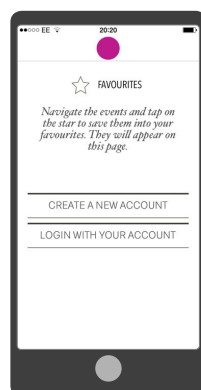
Menu

node. From each place node, it is possible to access their archive of past event nodes and, then, enter the individual profiles of these past event nodes. We connected the app to other interfaces so that users can share event nodes and places nodes on Facebook, Twitter but also via SMS and email. We designed a menu formed by four dots – connecting respectively to the sections *Events*, *Places*, *Favourites* and *Info* – that pop up on the screen when users tap on the pink dot indicator at the top of the screen. Therefore, although information on the app is organized to fit into the reduced space of portable exhibitionary interfaces, *Events* and *Places* resume the same structure of the web platform. The section *Info* replaces *About* and presents a slideshow – that users can swipe from the right to the left – crediting the benefactor that supported the app's construction, the company Rottapharm | Madaus² and providing instructions on how to use the app. This slideshow also appears every time the app is opened from a new smartphone³. As I will explain during this chapter, thanks to the introduction of user nodes, we could design the section *Favourite*, where users could curate by bookmarking events listed in the app via tapping on a star-

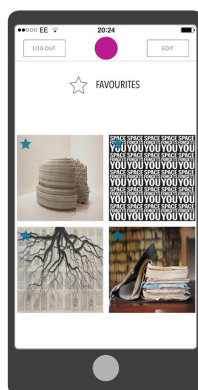
103



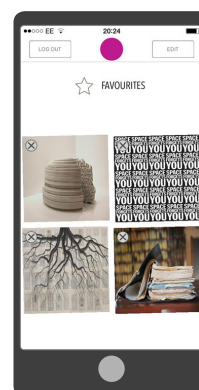
Event node – individual
page with the *Favourites*
star-shaped button



Favourites – log in and
sign up page



Favourites – a list of
bookmarked events



Favourites
– edit function

2 For more information about the relationship with Rottapharm | Madaus see appendix VII.

3 At the time of the development of That's App, the section *Hideout* was not yet implemented into the platform. For this reason, article nodes were not considered in its conception.

shaped button displayed in each event node. Users can, in this way, curate their selection of favourite events, adding and removing them at any time.

That's App resulted from the reconceptualization of *that's contemporary* as an interface for users to be able to connect everywhere and at any time. Mobility and connectedness were the main differences that characterized this second period of work in which hybrid exhibitionary networks were supposed to unfold not from users navigating a stationary interface, but who are constantly online. Using That's App from their mobile devices, users could remotely access our database to curate their own exhibition script of Milan according to their personal inclinations and dispositions. In *mobility*, the conception of an exhibition in hybrid space could be fully realized.

According to Adriana de Souza e Silva in 'From Cyber to Hybrid: Mobile Technologies as Interfaces of Hybrid Spaces' (2006), hybrid space is conceptualized according to three distinct but overlapping trends: as *connected space*, as *mobile space* and as *social space*. These spatial conditions describe the ways I have conceived hybrid exhibitionary spaces through the development of That's App and I will go on to contextualize them further in relation to the mobile interface.

Firstly, hybrid exhibitionary spaces emerge because of *connected spaces*. As de Souza e Silva writes, 'the emergence of portable technologies has contributed to the possibility of being always connected to digital space, literally "carrying" the Internet wherever we go' (de Souza e Silva, 2006, p. 263). This has led to a situation in which, 'users do not perceive physical and digital space as separate entities' (ibid, p. 263). In the same fashion, I would say that the experience of hybrid exhibitionary spaces by users who inhabit Milan while using That's App (and the network of other interfaces that the app connects to) cannot be dissected between parts that are experienced offline and those that are experienced online. In *experience*, these moments are inseparable because users move through the physical space of the exhibition while being connected to other exhibitionary elements via their smartphones. This links to the second feature: users produce the exhibition in *mobility*. In this reasoning, hybrid exhibitionary networks *form* depending on users' positions and *move* in relation to user's hybrid navigation. Due to the location-aware technologies carried by these devices, which I will analyze later in this chapter, users essentially function as nodes *transporting* the exhibition. Finally, these hybrid exhibitionary spaces are *social* because mobile and location-aware devices connect users to other users who have That's App installed on their devices.

The renewed focus on mobility, connectedness and sociality has prompted me to follow two main threads of investigation (also leading to changes in the exhibitionary functioning): the inclusion of exhibitor nodes and, most importantly, the engagement of user nodes.

EXHIBITOR NODES

The first transformation that we applied to our initial design – also the first concrete attempt to develop and challenge the original script – was carried out mainly by Luca and I, which involved the renovation of the event node structure, giving birth to the *exhibitor node*. To understand the role of the new category of exhibitor node, I first need to explain the situation that led us to create it.

At the end of 2012, Giulia and I negotiated with the staff of miart 2013 (the Milanese modern and contemporary art fair) to have a physical stand there in exchange for an online exhibition space within That's App that would display information (name and address of the gallery, artworks on show and stand number) as well as images about the exhibitors, artworks and events taking place within the fair. In doing so, we created a sub-section of nodes – the exhibitionary nodes – showing miart's exhibitors within the profile of the miart event node on That's App. In this sense, the creation of exhibitor nodes rendered the constitutive parts of the event node (which, in this case, was the fair) knowable to their users. This does not mean that the addition of exhibitor nodes increased the size of the event node, rather that exhibitor nodes made apparent the inside network forming the event node⁴. Yet, in this exhibitionary network, nodes were fixed not only in time but also in space⁵.

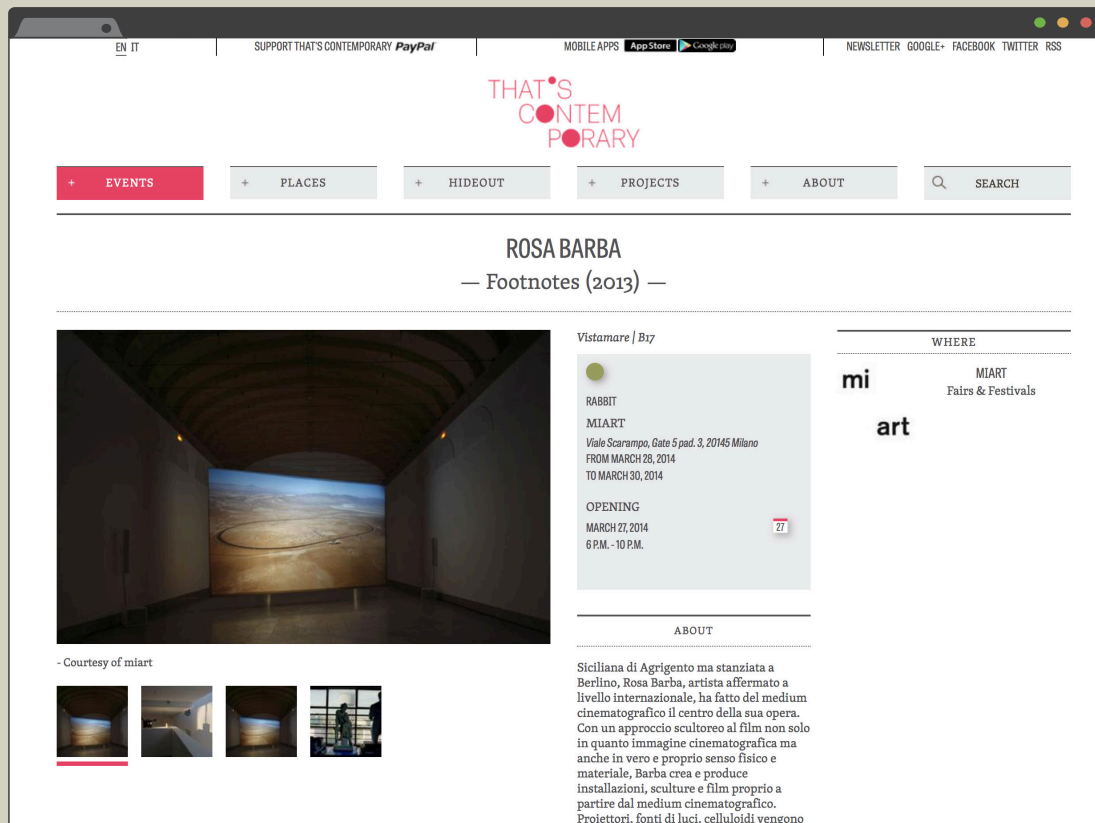
With this mechanism, once users had entered the app, they could navigate the activities occurring in Milan, then click on the event node of miart and, from there, have access to the individual pages of each miart exhibitor, i.e. the exhibitor node. Users could bookmark exhibitor nodes as a reminder of what they wanted to visit and where to find it. We could not geo-locate exhibitor nodes within the fair because the GPS could not position entities to such a degree of precision. For this reason, as mentioned above, in the database the position in space and time of each exhibitor node was fixed by the position of the fair. Therefore, while the stand numbers, which we had to insert one by one, indicated the precise locations of these exhibitors, the event node of the fair automatically set their temporal reference.

The creation of the exhibitor node made visible the internal exhibitionary network of the miart event node, which is part of an extended network of event nodes located in Milan. Yet, for miart 2013, this 'exhibition' within the app was actually a digital reiteration of a selection of exhibitors that had been previously selected by the director of the fair along with his curatorial team. What was exhibited in the app corresponded to what was on show in the fair. We basically

4 This could be referred to as an example of black-boxing as the inner constitutes of the miart event node were concealed to the user as they were kept inside the boundaries of an inscrutable node. With the creation of exhibitor nodes such parts are made available for use.

5 In the original structure that we designed for the release of *thatscontemporary.com*, the event node was divisible in a multiplicity of temporal spans, organizing the lifecycle of one event node through a network of (sub-) event nodes within a fixed location. An example is an exhibition hosting various events that are spread throughout different times between the exhibition's opening and ending dates. Differently, with exhibitor nodes, the event node is divided into a multiplicity of sub-events occurring not only in the same place (node) but also at the same time. The fair is, in fact, formed by manifold galleries, each concurrently creating their own exhibition in an allocated space within the fair.

SECOND CHAPTER



RABBIT #1

Screenshot of exhibitor node page with the artworks *Footnotes* (2013) by Rosa Barba at Vistamare's stand included in the *Rabbit #1*'s exhibitionary route.

In the same way that Giulia and I conceived *thatscontemporary.com* as an attempt to gain a clearer overview of the art scene in Milan and to enable users – including ourselves – to find art matching individual dispositions and tastes, *Rabbit #1* stemmed from the desire to make sense of the overwhelming amount of art in a busy fair through a route of solely ten artworks. In the collaboratively curatorial process behind *Rabbit #1*, curator Caterina Faila and I fixed a criteria to make a selection of these ten artworks. We decided to make a route of artworks that were by Italian art galleries and that were authored by artists under forty years old. We also wanted to select at least five women artists. We failed this proposition because we could not find enough artworks from female artists within this age bracket. I made this failure public in an article in *Exibart* (Baglietto, 2014) when explaining our work with *Rabbit #1*, and described the result of the selection:

‘The route, which could be completed at the last minute; just as numerous artworks have been finalized in these final days to be show for the first at miart, shows a diversified landscape: from artworks with political propositions to more conceptual projects, some with ironic nuances, other existential, and yet others that stem from aesthetic research. In general, RABBIT does not attempt to circumscribe a style nor delineate a particular contemporary trend of art produced and represented in Italy. RABBIT is a disinterested look on the fair and a path that attempts to mark a diverse cross-section of innovative artistic practices¹.

1 Translated by the author from Italian, ‘Il percorso, definito all'ultimo minuto, in quanto molte opere sono state terminate in questi giorni e saranno presentate in anteprima al miart, dimostra un panorama vario: da implicazioni politiche a progetti più concettuali, alcuni con sfumature ironiche, esistenziali, altri frutto più di una ricerca materica ed estetica. In generale, RABBIT non cerca di circoscrivere uno stile o una tendenza univoca nell'arte contemporanea italiana prodotta e rappresentata, piuttosto è uno sguardo disinteressato sulla fiera e un percorso che segna uno spaccato diversificato di un'Italia che comunque sa dire la sua’. The entire article is available at: <http://www.exibart.com/notizia.asp?IDNotizia=41962&IDCategoria=246> (Accessed 21 June, 2016)

THAT'S
CONTEMPORARY

D04 CHIARA FUMAI
Born in Roma, 1976
DOPE HEAD LEGGE VALERIE SOLANAS,
DOGARESSA ELISABETTA QUERINI VALIER
LEGGE VALERIE SOLANAS (2013)
A Palazzo / D04

E18 OSCAR GIACONIA
Born in Milano, 1978
THE GRINDER (2013)
Thomas Brambilla / E18

B17 ROSA BARBA
Born in Agrigento, 1972
FOOTNOTES (2013)
Vistamare / B17

D18 ALESSANDRO PIANGIAMORE
Born in Enna, 1976
LA CERA DI ROMA #7 (2013)
Magazzino / D18

E13 RICCARDO BERETTA
Born in Mariano Comense, 1982
(2013-2014)
Gossonade / E13

D06 CHIARA CAMONI
Born in Piacenza, 1974
SENZA TITOLO #09 (2014)
Spazio A / D06

D23 FILIPPO MANZINI
Born in Firenze, 1975
SURFACES AND TIME (2014)
Frittelli / D23

D02 ALICE GUARESCHI
Born in Parma, 1976
FARAWAY MEMORIES, EARLIER
MEMORIES, DETESTABLE MEMORIES,
WONDERFUL MEMORIES (2014)
Francesco Pontaleone / D02

E09 GABRIELE DE SANTIS
Born in Roma, 1983
() (2014)
Frucca / E09

E19 ALFREDO ACETO
Born in Torino, 1991
iiiiiii_72 (2013)
Luce / E19

RABBIT WILL LEAD YOU INTO AN ALTERNATIVE
JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY, REVEALING AN UNEXPECTED
PATHWAY, WHILE STUMBLING UPON NEW INSIGHTS
ABOUT ARTWORK ON THAT'S APP

RABBIT

A FRESH SELECTION OF
CONTEMPORARY ART FROM
ITALY AT MIART 2014

BY THAT'S CONTEMPORARY

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reproduced the fair in digital space without applying any transformation to it. Differently, for miart 2014, with the help of young curator Caterina Failla (at the time editorial contributor for *that's contemporary*) and then miart 2015 with Simona Squadrito, we shrunk the number of exhibitor nodes and decided to author *that's contemporary's* exhibitionary network, forming a mediated experience of miart. Therefore, in 2014, via picking one artwork from a group of ten Italian exhibitors we curated *Rabbit #1*, a journey through a group of artworks exhibited across the fair. Caterina and I published the artworks on the platform and the app, entering them in the database as exhibitor nodes at the miart 2014 event node. Each artwork selected was accompanied by a short review written in Italian. In addition, Giulia and I commissioned the design of a printed paper map to graphic designers Roberto Galli and Michela von Savino. The map was distributed all over the fair along with a series of stickers of a rabbit.

Since this first version we have used the catch line 'follow me...' clearly referring to Lewis Carroll's character of the white rabbit from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). The invitation to follow the rabbit acted as a call, or to maintain my terminologies as a *prescription*, to use the exhibition along a prescribed exhibitionary route – which in this case is the fair mediated by *that's contemporary* – according to our curatorial selection on the map.

The same concept was applied with *Rabbit #2* when we made a proposal for miart 2015. The same format was suggested but weaving together a journey of twelve 'must-see-things' to visit amongst artworks within the fair, as well as exhibitions and events happening across the city. We wanted to connect together and give the same level of hierarchy to the exhibitor nodes (that are sub-nodes of the fair event node) with a selection of other event nodes.

If this decision did not represent a challenge in regards to the creation of the paper map, it was for considering how to publish this journey on the platform, because such a detail was breaking the logic of *that's contemporary's* database. As stated in the first chapter, the database structure functions according to a set of hierarchies amongst nodes that are *not* flexible. In this structure, the exhibitor node is categorised as a sub-node of an event node and the exhibition is 'locked-in' to this hierarchy. For this reason, we had to create a new space that could host *Rabbit #2*, which, after miart, was transformed in the *Hideout* exhibitionary section explained in the previous chapter. This new space allowed the exhibitionary network of the fair event node, that with *Rabbit #1* was constrained within the space of the physical fair and separated from Milan's exhibitionary network, to symbolically break the rigid categories imposed by the database in which exhibitor nodes are always sub-nodes of event nodes.

Yet, to know whether *Hideout* freed our curatorial agency from the hierarchical imposition of the initial script, this new autonomy has to be understood as a temporary condition. The new section generated from a renewed curatorial script is, as a matter of fact, another framework, which will

MUSEO APPARENTE
STAND N13 - EMERGENT

Hella Gerlach
TACT FLOU
(HOOP THE LOOP)
2015, 60 x 120 x 80 cm
acciaio verniciato a polvere, stampa digitale su tessuto, schiuma, smalto (powder-coated steel, digital print on fabric, foam, glaze)

Proiettarsi in un hotel, iniziare un dialogo, ricevere il materiale: l'explicita richiesta dell'artista di continuare l'opera con l'immaginazione. Jacques Rancière direbbe, emancipa lo spettatore dalla passività della sua fruizione.

Emisión a hotel, touch materials, start a dialogue: Jacques Rancière would claim that the artist's explicit request to make use of the work through imagination finally emancipates the bystander from the passivity of consumption.

FRANCESCO PANTALEONE
STAND B22 - ESTABLISHED

Ignazio Mortellaro
LAND III
2015, 130 x 77 cm
lastra di metallo, filo di nylon, chiodi (metal plates, nylon wire, nails)

Quest'opera è sicuramente la punta lirica di Rabbit: una appassionata dialettica tra la rigida geometria della composizione e la mistica alchimica del materiale utilizzato.

This work is the lyrical peak of Rabbit: a passionate dispute between the rigid geometry of the composition and the mystical alchemy of the material used.

MIART2015
dentro

THE SUNDAY PAINTER
STAND E14 - EMERGENT

James Vincenzi
UNTITLED
2015, 160 x 140 cm
impermeabile di plastica, telaio in legno (plastic raincoat, wooden stretcher)

Spirited, irriverent e impossibili da dimenticare. Gli abiti-tela sembrano usciti da una vetrina delle vie dello shopping milanese, poi ad osservare bene li accorgi dei difetti. Ma ormai è troppo tardi: con gli abiti-tela al braccio (che non hai potuto non comprare!) "il pittore della domenica" ti manda a casa a mezzo sorriso sulle labbra.

Witty, irreverent and impossible to forget. The suit-paintings seem lifted from the sleek shopping windows of Milan. However upon closer inspection, you see the flaws. Well... It's already too late: with the suit-paintings under your arm (that you eventually bought!) "the sunday painter" is sending you home with a half smile.

FRUITA GALLERY
STAND E15 - EMERGENT

Ditte Gantriis
BODY & SOUL
2014, 98 x 146 cm
vimini (wickerwork)
200 x 93 x 3 cm
acrilico su tela, cornice a foglie di betulla (acrylic paint on canvas, birch ply-wood frame)

Un dilemma centenario, quello del dualismo tra anima e corpo, su cui le massime menti ci si sono scervellate, da Sant'Agostino, a Cartesio, a Kant e via dicendo. Ditte, con la scusa dell'IKEA e una buona dose di arguzia, riconsuetizza la questione in termini di estetica contemporanea.

For centuries, the dualism of body and soul has obsessed the greatest thinkers - from St. Augustine, to Descartes, to Kant and so on. Ditte, via the pretext of IKEA, brilliantly reframes the issue in terms of contemporary aesthetics.

NEED DESIGN
STAND A11 - OBJECT

Duccio Maria Gambi
COMPLEMENTO LIQUIDO
2015, dimensioni variabili / variable size
cemento, resina (cement, resin)

Si potrebbero spendere diverse parole in merito, ciò che spicca è che questo tavolo da caffè, con le sue linee spiccatamente minimaliste, è pura arte consegnata alla vita di tutti i giorni.

We could say many things but what stands out is that this coffee table, with its distinctly minimalist lines, is just pure art consigned to life everyday.

LESSON GALLERY
VIA ZEMLE 3

Cory Arcangel
HOT TOPICS
2015, Solo Show

Nonostante questa estetica post-mediale, post-capitalistica, post-internet sia ormai dilagante, dove parlare di knowi high e low o online e offline è anacronistico, Cory è ancora capace di stupirci. Racconta persino con un discorso che parte da tubi in plastica.

Even though our shared post-media, post-capitalist, post-internet aesthetic is now flooded, where talk of dualism between high and low or online and offline is anachronistic, Cory is still able to surprise us, this time even constructing a discourse via pool noodles.

EXTRA DRY
DRY COCKTAILS & PIZZA
VIA SOLFERINO 33

Antonio Rovaldi
CALL ME
2015, 5'30" loop
installazione video a colori su 3 canali (3-channel color video installation)

Già ci piaceva il fatto che Dry portasse l'arte in pizzeria, ma con questa installazione addirittura s'confina dalle mura del locale e conquista l'intera via Solferino Alta. E in fa al ritmo incantevole di una Manhattan descritta dalla poesia di Frank O'Hara.

We already liked the fact that Dry brings art to a pizzeria, but with this installation, it strays from the walls to claim the whole street, via Solferino. And it does so at the pace of a Manhattan as described by the poetry of Frank O'Hara.

CLUB TO CLUB
BUNA, VIA PADOVA 272

Nico Vaccellari,
Andy Stott, Ben Frost
#C2C15 MILANO
2015, Party

Se, durante il MIART, andare alle feste è già esperienza imprevedibile, questa è proprio da non perdere anche solo per il fatto che è una ricerca artistica sul divertimento stesso. Si aggirano poi che la location è un ex-cinema, ex-discoeca, ex-strip club. Proprio da non farsi mancare niente.

During miart, going to parties is already an unavoidable experience. However, this one is really not to be missed - the site once held a cinema, then a nightclub, then a strip club -, and now is part of an artistic research on entertainment itself.

Una guida alternativa al MIART 2015, di that's contemporary

RABBIT #2 È UNA MAPPA CONCETTUALE CHE TI GUIDA ATTRAVERSO MIART 2015.

Senza nessun limite di genere, disciplina, generazione e nazionalità, Rabbit #2 ha selezionato e negoziato con gallerie, curatori e artisti una cernita di otto "cose" da vedere in fiera e fuori in un percorso tra opere d'arte, oggetti di design, mostre e musica. Ad accompagnare il visitatore lungo il percorso, un racconto

in due capitoli è disponibile su *Hideout* (tutto in inglese), la nuova sezione curatoriale di *that'scontemporary.com*.
Hideout non termina con MIART. Piuttosto sulle tracce dell'arte a Milano svelerà con una serie di studio visit ricerche e retroscena del lavoro di artisti e curatori attivi in città.
E ora inizia a seguire il conigli...

Per le info sui biglietti al MIART 2015

An alternative guide to MIART 2015, by that's contemporary

RABBIT #2 IS A CONCEPTUAL MAP TO FIND YOUR WAY THROUGH MIART 2015.

With no limit on gender, discipline, generation and nationality, Rabbit #2 has selected and negotiated with galleries, curators and artists an array of eight "things" to see inside and outside the fair in a tale of artworks, design objects, exhibitions and music. To walk the visitor along

the path, a narrative account in two chapters is available on *Hideout*, the new curatorial section on *that'scontemporary.com*.

Hideout will not end with MIART... Indeed, on the trail of art in Milan, it will continue through a number of studio visit unweaving artists' and curators' backstages and research. Now it's time to follow the rabbit...

perhaps embody a new set of rules, which could become the next inconvenient boundaries for the exhibition to exceed.

USER NODES

The second adaptation made to the initial platform's structure was the addition of user nodes. The role of users progressively assumed a more significant place within the mechanisms of performing the exhibition. With the renovation of the database, Luca added the section *Users*. Despite the fact that this section has been never visibly asserted amongst the other sections (i.e. *Events*, *Places*, *Hideout*, *Projects* and *About*) on the app and/or the platform, it played a meaningful part in the ways in which we started to rethink the role of users in *that's contemporary*. Therefore, the hybrid exhibitionary space of *thatscontemporary.com*, which was originally made of event nodes, place nodes and article nodes, was eventually enriched by the new category of user nodes. Instead of perpetuating an outmoded classification separating the curators of the platform from its users or visitors, Luca conceived a system populated by individuals indiscriminately categorized as users.

The compilation of this new typology of nodes began by profiling and storing users, starting with us. The user node was conceived as a space that could encompass anyone involved in *that's contemporary*. The degree of involvement by each user is dictated by sets of permissions and tasks implicating how they can operate within *that's contemporary's* interfaces. These permissions and tasks are managed and allocated to users by 'admin users' – that are the 'power users' or

that's contemporary's stand
at miart 2015



‘super curators’ such as myself – from the database of *that’s contemporary*⁶. This will be elaborated later in this section in order to show how, by prescribing users with tasks to carry out in these exhibitionary spaces, an innovative way to think the exhibition becomes apparent. In the following sections, I will discuss how the addition of the user nodes to the database of *that’s contemporary* led to understanding the exhibition from three new points of view: *useful*, *social* and *customized*.

The use-value of the exhibition

With the expression ‘use-value’ I will refer to the value given by individual users to the exhibition while activating it. It might be interpreted as the concrete way in which the exhibition is ‘useful’ to its users in their ‘reality’. I will later clarify what I mean with the terms ‘usefulness’ and ‘reality’ but, before that, I want to state the questions that I will try to address in this section. How might an exhibition have an impact on ‘reality’ and, in this way, be ‘useful’? How might the use-value of an exhibition be assessed? And, obviously, what kind of proposal for a useful exhibition have I suggested with *that’s contemporary*?

To address these questions, I will start by considering Tania Bruguera’s concept of *Arte Útil* (Useful Art)⁷ and then I will explore it by using Stephen Wright’s concepts such as ‘coefficient of art’ as addressed in *Toward a Lexicon of Usership* (2013).

For Bruguera, ‘the sense of Useful Art is to imagine, create, develop and implement something that, produced in artistic practice, offers to people a clearly beneficial result’ (Bruguera, 2012). Bruguera states that the usefulness of Useful Art, is ‘determined by the relationship with the people for whom [the work] is made and the transformations in the conditions within which the work is made. The perfect moment appears [...] when the people for whom it was made [...] expropriate it from the artist and make it theirs’ (ibid). Most importantly, she resumes this concept saying, ‘Useful Art goes from the state of proposal to that of application in reality’ (ibid). Therefore, usefulness is given by the application of the work in reality. The notion of what constitutes *Arte Útil* has also been determined by a set of criteria formulated by Bruguera along with curators at the Queens Museum, in New York, Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven and Grizedale Arts in Coniston. This set of criteria has been published on the website of the project, *The Museum of Arte Útil* (2013 - 2014) and states that Useful Art projects should:

6 This logic of structuring user nodes’ permissions is similar to the mechanism adopted by Facebook. In Facebook there are five types of roles for users who manage Pages: Admin, Editor, Moderator, Advertiser, Analyst. Only users that are assigned with the role of Admin can change someone’s role. Admin users are actually allowed to carry out any operations within the page, while other roles have a limitation of actions (Facebook, 2016).

7 Tania Bruguera developed the concept of *Arte Útil* (Useful Art) by setting an academy in Havana, in her project *The Museum of Arte Útil* (2013 - 2014) at Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, residencies at Immigrant Movement International and with the *Arte Útil lab* at Queens Museum of Art both in New York.

- 1 – Propose new uses for art within society
- 2 – Challenge the field within which it operates (civic, legislative, pedagogical, scientific, economic, etc.)
- 3 – Be timing specific, respond to current urgencies
- 4 – Be implemented and function in real situations
- 5 – Replace authors with initiators and spectators with users
- 6 – Have practical, beneficial outcomes for its users
- 7 – Pursue sustainability whilst adapting to changing conditions
- 8 – Re-establish aesthetics as a system of transformation

(MUSEUM OF ARTE ÚTIL, 2013)

It seems that this outline could be condensed into two main conditions. Firstly, Useful Art does not need to be framed by an art context but informed by a certain 'coefficient of art' (Wright, 2013)⁸. Secondly, Useful Art needs to be experienced in 'reality' – Useful Art needs to be *used*. This second condition comes as a consequence of the first one as, in Bruguera, what is confined in the frame of art is removed from 'reality'. Now, there seems to be a peculiar relationship between 'reality' and 'usefulness' that needs to be explored as it connects to the stress I put on the idea of 'use'. To investigate into this relationship, I will refer to Giorgio Agamben's concept of 'profanation'.

In his essay, 'In Praise of Profanation' (2007 [2005]), Agamben discusses the rapport between the 'sacred' and the 'profane', which I consider crucial to understand how reality is connected to use. He writes:

Sacred and religious were the things that in some way belonged to the gods. As such, they were removed from the free use and commerce of men. [...] Any act that violated and transgresses this special unavailability [...] was sacrilegious. And, if "to consecrate" was the term that indicated the removal of things from the sphere of human law, "to profane" meant, conversely, to return them to the free use of men. [...] But use does not appear here as something natural: rather, one arrives as it only by means of profanation. (AGAMBEN, 2007, P. 73-74)

With the acts of turning something in a sacred or profaned entity, Agamben highlights the existence of two spheres: a 'sacred sphere' where things, through consecration, are removed from the common use of humankind (therefore, from reality), and a 'human sphere' where things, via profanation, are given

8 In *Toward a Lexicon of Usership* (2013), Stephen Wright uses the concept of 'coefficient of art' to suggest 'that art is not a set of objects or events, distinct from the larger set of objects and events that are not art, but rather a degree of intensity liable to be present in any number of things – indeed, in any number of symbolic configurations, activities or passivities. Could it be that art is no longer (or perhaps never was) a minority practice, but rather something practiced by a majority, appearing with varying coefficients in different contexts?' (Wright, 2013, p. 13). The 'coefficient of art' sits in Wright's lexicon as one of the emergent concepts in artistic practice underpinning usership. The relationship between usership and Bruguera's Arte Útil lies on both desire to break down the division between the art and 'real situations'. For both authors, art needs to be conceived to trigger 'transformations' in reality.

back to the use of humankind. Carrying on with this opposition, but from the perspective that interests this thesis, we can suggest the antagonism between these two dimensions in relation to art. On the one hand, there is art as something 'sacred', removed from common use and put in a condition of what Stephen Wright (2013) and others have called 'spectatorship', which has enabled art – since Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790) – to fulfil its longstanding aesthetic purpose⁹. On the other hand, there is art as something 'profane' that is experienced in the sphere of the human and that is an expression of aesthetics as a form of application in human daily life, what I have beforehand referred to as 'reality'. This type of art is what Bruguera might consider Useful Art.

Now, in light of these concepts of usefulness and reality, which I explored in relation to art, I need to come back to the focus of my thesis, the exhibition. It is interesting to notice that the function of the exhibition, put in its traditional relation to the museum, operates in a 'consecrated form' that removes art from common use. As Agamben says, 'Museum [...] is not a given physical space or place but the separate dimension [of the 'sacred']'. He continues saying that, '[e]verything today can become a Museum because this term simply designates the exhibition of an impossibility of using, of dwelling, of experiencing' (Agamben, 2007, p. 84). In this essay, the idea of the exhibition as an example of the 'impossibility of using' is supported by building upon Walter Benjamin's concept of 'exhibition-value' as explained in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936). In Benjamin, exhibition-value refers to the increasing accessibility for the work of art to be exhibited due to technological reproducibility. The more an object is exhibited, the greatest is the accumulation of value accrued by this object. For Agamben, Benjamin's notion of exhibition-value adds a third term to the Marxian opposition between use-value and exchange-value. He writes that exhibition-value, 'is not use-value, because what is exhibited is, as such, removed from the sphere of use; it is not exchange-value, because it in no way measures any labor power' (Agamben, 2007, p. 90). Therefore, it is feasible to say that for Agamben, the condition of exhibition corresponds to a condition of uselessness and detachment from 'reality'. As a matter of fact, having untethered the exhibition from the museum, my thesis states the opposite.

What I have argued so far is that the exhibition actually exists along a

⁹ The relation between conditions of spectatorship and art's aesthetic purpose has been notoriously introduced by Immanuel Kant in his, *Critique of Judgement* (1790). In this text, two notions that stand against the possibility for art to be useful, were notoriously introduced: firstly, the idea of 'disinterested spectatorship' and, secondly, the assignation to art of a 'purposeless purpose'. The concept of disinterested spectatorship is the idea that art gives a type of aesthetic pleasure to spectators that is free from any utilitarian interest. This combination of spectatorship and lack of interest not only introduces, as Stephen Wright comments in *Toward a Lexicon of Usership* (2013), 'a fundamentally passive form of relationality (spectatorship) as the cornerstone of the aesthetic regime of art' but it also 'shore[s] it up by insisting on its *désintéressement* – in other words, that it remain exempt from any possible use, usership or use value' (Wright, 2013, p. 61). This means that there rests in lack of interest also a lack of agency that brings about an impossibility of use. The other Kantian idea, the 'purposeless purpose', refers to the paradox for which art aims at not having any actual aim, a characteristic that alludes to its aesthetic purpose (ibid. p. 51). As a matter of fact, if the spectator is disinterested, the art object is automatically deprived of any other purposes than of being useless. In his lexicon, Wright classifies both disinterested spectatorship and purposeless purpose as conceptual institutions of the art field that need to be retired.

network of interfaces that are in *use* and that are the result of a collective labor. This, on the one hand, acknowledges Benjamin's conception of exhibition-value. Indeed, stressing on the extended exhibitionary possibility given by technological reproducibility, Benjamin's argument is actually in line with my conception of distributed exhibitionary spaces, in which the value of the object is resultant from the extension of its exhibitionary space. On the other hand, my idea that interfaces imply the interaction of humankind (or use) denies Agamben's concept for which the displayability of the exhibited object, given by the exhibition-value, neutralizes the possibility for humans to use such a object. On the contrary, (exhibitionary) interfaces are not removed from 'reality', they are part of the daily and hybrid reality, our social space. The exhibition that these interfaces encapsulate transitions from conception into existence because interfaces are used. In this sense, my idea of exhibitionary space does not assume a form of separation where the exhibited object is placed in the sphere of the 'sacred' and, therefore, restricted to a dimension of spectatorship. Rather, it presents an exhibition that to exist implies a ceaseless condition of activation by users - no matter if they are just spectators or actual authors - which is what allows the 'exhibitionary' to unfold. The exhibition that engenders within a network of interfaces is useful, as *Arte Útil* is, because users expropriate the exhibition from the original authors and make it theirs in experience.

At this point, it is worthwhile looking back at the premise of this section, in which I have stated that the use-value of the exhibition refers to how an exhibition is useful in the 'reality' of its users, which more specifically means how this exhibition is able to bring a transformation in the users' daily life. In this regard, the exhibition is not the frame containing art and separating from daily use. Rather the value of the exhibition lies in the possibility of being use. Consequently, the use-value is given by the value that *each* user attributes to the exhibition as it takes place in use. Because of this, the use-value of the exhibition is perhaps better found in the way users participate in the exhibition, which, as I explained, is one of the 'realities' in which they are embedded.

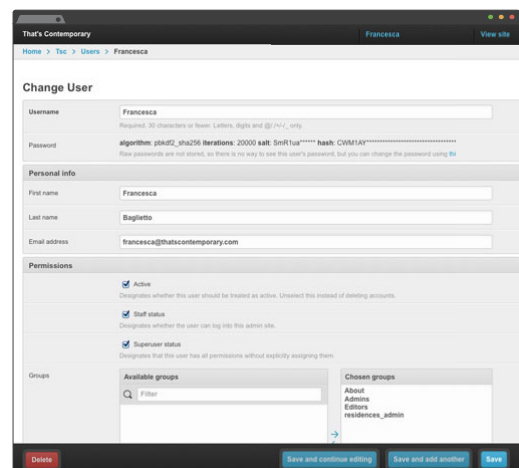
As I have mentioned beforehand, within *that's contemporary's* interfaces, the type of user participation of the exhibition is specified by sets of permissions and tasks that determine how and to what extent a specific group of users can operate within the interface / exhibition. This system fashions the various types of user participation in the exhibition. 'Active status' assigns whether a user is able to act with an *agency* within the platform and the app. In order to 'formally' participate in the exhibition, a user needs to be *activated*. The activation of a user is processed automatically by the software when users log into *That's App* by entering their email or by authorizing the app harvesting users' contacts from their Facebook or Google account contacts. Once logged into the app, users can bookmark event nodes and place nodes, thus curating their personal section *Favourites*.

The section *Favourites* was created specifically for the app and constitutes

a semi-private exhibitionary space of individual users that inscribe and curate for their own use. In this way, users *ascribe* their own choices to the exhibitionary networks that Giulia and I curated. Put in other words, they ‘profane’ the selection of the author curators and make the exhibition theirs. This is the case for Giulia and I as well; being users of the platform and the app, we can keep re-inscribing our own networks in our private sections. Put in another way, each user *completes* their own exhibitionary script according to the many but limited possibilities that the script allows. In this reading, the script, in fact, dwells in a dialectic between the author/curator’s intentions and the users’ choices among the options they are given.

To designate whether the user can log into the administration of thatscontemporary.com (which the app is also linked to), the user needs to be accredited as ‘staff user’. The main difference between staff users and other users is that – being able to access the admin side of *that’s contemporary* that is a sort of back-end of the exhibition – they can operate on the way the exhibition is presented to users in the first place.

There are different sets of permissions that are granted to different staff users. The degree of operability that each staff user is allowed depends on the ‘group’ they are part of. Each group gives a different admittance to sections and tasks that can be administered in these exhibitionary spaces. Status assigns the task of *inscribing* networks to a user. For example, the group ‘editors’ permits a staff user node to enter and edit information in events nodes, places nodes and articles nodes. The group ‘admin’ gives a staff user node the possibility to change and add status to other user nodes, to activate and deactivate users and allocate permissions to them. They can *prescribe* and *preclude* tasks to other user nodes. For example, being a user partaking in the admin group, I can add staff users but I can also ban a user from acting on the platform, deactivating their agency (rather than deleting their account). In other words, the admin group are the curators of the system, the ones who *care* about the efficiency of the system – about social interactions and cooperation (Krysa, 2013). The group ‘residence admin’ allows a staff user node to access and edit another body of information that displays exhibitionary networks in another part of the platform that is thatscontemporary.com/artinresidence¹⁰. Finally, there is also the ‘super user status’ that refers to a group of users granted with all permissions without explicitly being assigned them, they are in charge of



Screenshot of the user profile page from the admin panel. The interface shows the set of permissions and group categories that characterise users.

10 Giulia, Andrea, Luca and I have developed and curated www.thatscontemporary.com/artinresidence, in partnership with the Italian non-profit organization *Fare Arte*. This part of the platform is dedicated to art residencies worldwide and exists under the acronym AIR – *artinresidence*. It is not visualized as a section within *that’s contemporary*, but a banner on the right column of the platforms links to it. Between 2014 and 2015, *that’s contemporary* developed the exhibitionary technology, while *Fare Arte* provided their pre-existing network of contacts of residencies. The project received financial support from Cariplo Foundation and Lombardy Region. The official web-address of AIR is www.artinresidence.it (Last access: 6th June 2016).

the general administration of the database.

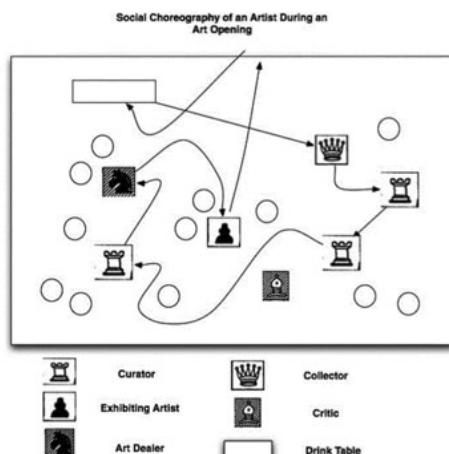
In this organization, the database achieves a system within which the exhibition, understood as social space, functions. What has been portrayed, after all, is a relational system in which users have different roles and operate different tasks that are all aimed towards the staging of the exhibition. In this sense, *that's contemporary* seems to achieve a system of use-value in which each user operates within the exhibition according to the use-value that s/he grants to it. Along these lines, the exhibition is collaboratively achieved by a collective of actors within a type of system that I could decipher by using Stephen Wright's conceptualization of the 'art user' and 'usership'. He writes:

Art users [...] refers to a broad category comprising all those people who have a stake in art taking place; the broadest possible category of the framers of art, who ultimately generate its relationality. Usership¹¹ breaks down obsolete binaries between authorship and spectatorship, production and reception, owners and producers, publishers and readers, for it refers to a category of people who make use of art and whose counter-expertise stems from that particular form of relationality known as use-value in their lifeworlds. (WRIGHT, 2007, EMPHASIS ADDED)

As mentioned above, the database structure of *that's contemporary* – being based only on the category of users – challenges these obsolete binaries that Wright contests. Also, it seems to me that Wright's 'relationality' outlines my understanding of exhibitionary spaces, in which users act according to their expertise (in the case of staff users) and their counter-expertise (in the case of any other user). In *that's contemporary*, users with different affiliations to the exhibitionary interface are all comprised within the category of the user nodes. No matter what their expertise or counter-expertise, users, borrowing Wright's

terminology, function as the 'framers of the exhibition'. In this interpretation, Wright's 'framers of art' are transformed into the 'framers of the exhibition' and the concept of *usership* is applied to exhibitions rather than art. An exhibition in condition of usership, indeed, the realisation of a networked arena in which the exhibition emerges as a common outcome of an assembly of 'framers' or 'users', with each of them characterized by the different ways in which their actions alter their relations within

Pablo Helguera, *Ideal Social Choreography for an Artist at an Opening*, 2008



11 Stephen Wright defines usership as a 'new category of political subjectivity: [...] the rise of user generated content and value in 2.0 culture, as well as democratic polities whose legitimacy is founded on the ability of the governed to appropriate and use available political and economic instruments, has produced active 'users' (not just rebels, prosumers, or automatons) whose agency is exerted, paradoxically, exactly where it is expected' (Wright, 2013, p. 66).

the exhibition¹². Even though with *that's contemporary* there is an attempt to acknowledge and value the contribution of each user, it is obvious that the equalization of roles into the broad category of users does not erase hierarchy found in *that's contemporary* with the allocation of status by 'admin users' or 'super users'. Yet, what I see in this exhibition is a process of task distribution amongst users, which certainly replaces the reductionism of binary hierarchies such as producer and consumer or author and spectator. This mutualization is intensified by the fact that the user nodes of *that's contemporary* might often be active users on its social media platforms where exhibitionary networks are negotiated along users' engagement (such as views, comments and tweets). Outside of the controlled system of the platform and app, *that's contemporary* enlarges its exhibitionary and reputational network through non-staff user nodes. The exhibition as a whole is, thus, produced along the multiple agencies carried by the different *framers*, our user nodes.

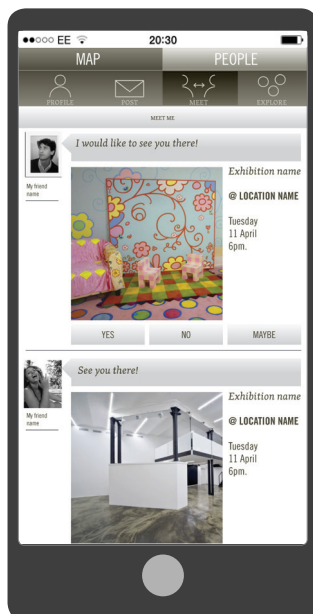
The UIT (Use It Together) exhibition

The idea that the hybrid exhibition was performed by user nodes in *action* led Andrea and I to work on a graphic layout in which event nodes were classified according to a typology of activities or (art) uses. We could not implement this design, nonetheless the idea being that user nodes would pick out an event node according to their required type of use. Each category was intended as a different way to use art, possibly suiting different users' predispositions. The categories we conceived were: *See*, which would encompass mostly spectatorship activities such as visiting exhibitions or watching screenings; *Party (or Chill)* to highlight social exchange such as exhibition private views and art-related events; *Think (and Talk)* featuring conferences and panel discussions; and *Make* denoting workshops, educational projects and artists residencies. I would have assigned one of these uses to each newly added event node, which users could accept or simply ascribe new uses to. We integrated a messaging service in these layouts that would have let each user node *invite* other user nodes to physically *meet* in an event node and *use* this event node together according (or not) to the activity I ascribed to it. Similar to the 'events' created on Facebook, the invitation could have been accepted, declined or signed with 'maybe'. Still, in using the event node together, no matter if embracing or *not* my prescribed activity, user nodes would have invested in the social dimension of usership as expressed in the Wright's acronym UIT, 'use it together' (Wright, 2013, p. 63).

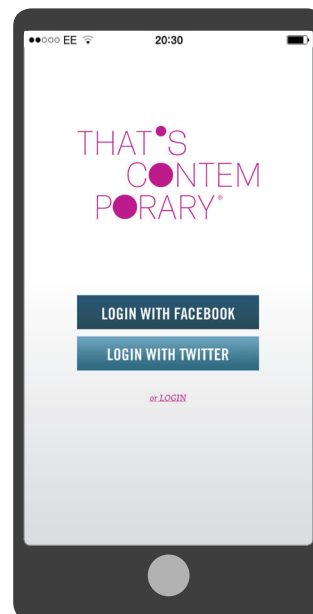
12 This mechanism seems to be echoed in a graphic image of the 'art world' as a chessboard by artist Pablo Helguera, titled *Ideal Social Choreography for an Artist at an Opening* published along with Ivan Mečl's text 'Art World' (2008). It shows a form of relationality, as I discussed above, in which users play a type of exhibition. Each piece personifies an (art world) user strategically moving according to a set of pre-established rules. Helguera's art world roles and movements are performed by the different chess pieces. Even though these pieces exist in a hierarchy as some are allowed more 'powerful' movements than others, the game, to be played, requires all of the pieces to take part. Envisioning the art world as a game leads us to consider each user involved as indispensable and irreplaceable. Despite differing agencies and authorities, each player contributes to the game. Yet, there is a fault with this analogy, which is that while in chess rules cannot be changed, in the relationality of the misuse of the exhibition there is the possibility to challenge the rules carried out by users.



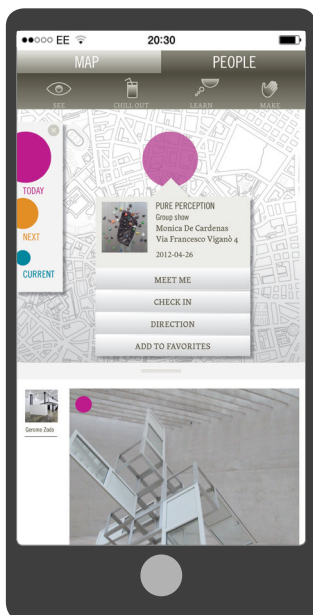
Users can select events based on their typology: they can visit an exhibition (See), or have fun in a private view (Party), or attend a conference (Think), or participate in a workshop (Make).



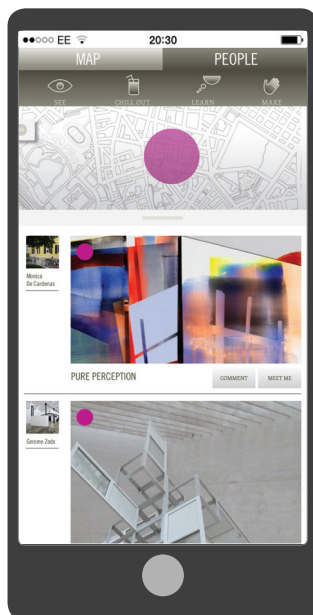
They choose activities and share them with friends. Users can find out where and which of their friends are going and let them know if they will join.



Integration with Facebook and Twitter.



Users can also browse events through the geo-temporal map. The app suggests the shortest route to places and allows users to invite others to participate in an event together.



Users can navigate events scrolling up and down a list that is temporally ordered



Users can enter the personal page of each event

He writes, 'Usership is a strangely impersonal collective noun - it doesn't really name a collectivity of users, but it definitely implies multiplicity. [...] UIT is one of the way to invite users to consciously build upon [it]' (ibid).

We did not develop this feature as in-built functionality of the app, but took advantage of the messaging services of other interfaces to let users invite others to use event nodes together. In the final version, user nodes can actually *share* event nodes and place nodes with other users nodes on Facebook, Twitter, email and SMS (no matter if these other users are signed up with That's App or not)¹³. Information on event nodes and place nodes is harvested from our database and joined together with a friendly invitation that reads, 'Do you want to go with me?'

To think of *that's contemporary* as a UIT exhibition, as a social and shared exhibitionary space, links to another aspect of the exhibition that I would like to discuss, drawing upon another relation that connects Wright's 'art users' to my category of user nodes. Indeed, in Wright, the art user, 'contests expert culture not from the standpoint of some competing expertise but from the standpoint of *experience*' (Wright, 2007, emphasis added). This resumes one of the characteristics that Giulia and I assessed as an obstacle in the foundational exhibition script outlined in the first chapter. In the column 'Authority' of our original script, we were supposed to place our recognized expertise as a result of our past activities in the field. Because we were just about to conclude our studies and had little professional experience ([X] attribute scripted in: authority / obstacle, '*Lack of track record of past projects. We need to construct our reputation from scratch*'), our only experience was given as being users ([X] attribute scripted in: authority / exclusive, '*Plenty of experience of art users*'). Nonetheless, we realized that we could have valued our experience as art users and mutualize it with the other users of *that's contemporary* ([X] attribute scripted in: personality / exclusive, '*Abolition of expert culture: curators = users*'). This initial proposition resembles an approach that Jacques Rancière named the 'equality of intelligences' in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991 [1987]). In this text, Rancière affirms that all people are equally intelligent and that disparities as well as dissimilarities in knowledge are only a matter of opportunities and drives. Someone can teach something to someone else in a condition of common acceptance of reciprocal knowledge. If this method is applied to the process of the exhibition as it takes place, it is possible to imagine how a user with an expertise engages with another user that might have some other expertise as they engender the exhibitionary.

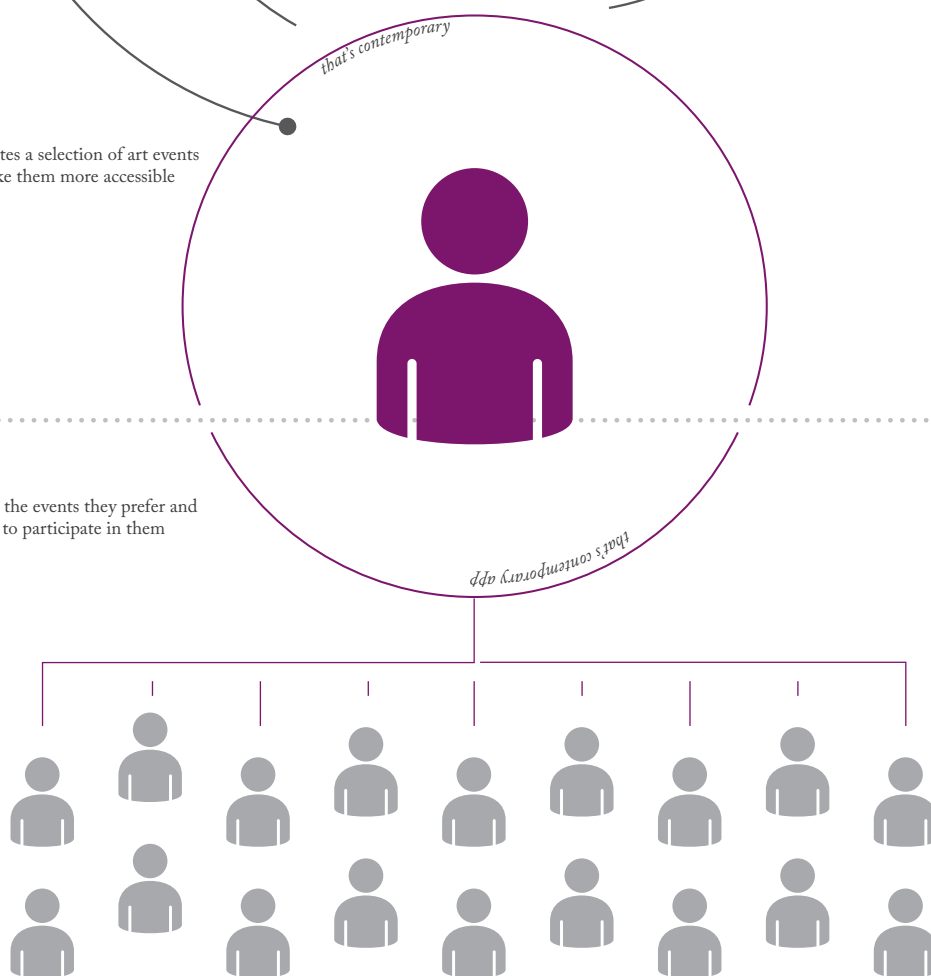
With this attitude, we began to understand this process of inscribing and prescribing exhibitionary networks via searching and starring place nodes and event nodes as a mode of *experiencing* along with other users. Curating this exhibition became another way of sharing and, therefore, using the exhibition

13 This transfer of data occurs through dedicated APIs that permit communication between the That's App's interface, the database, and the applications (Facebook, Twitter, mail and SMS) installed on the user's smartphone. API is the acronym of application programming interface. In computer language, API refers to a set of specific standards for building applications.

1 The contemporary art scene in Milan.

2 That's App curates a selection of art events and places to make them more accessible

3 Users can select the events they prefer and invite other users to participate in them together.



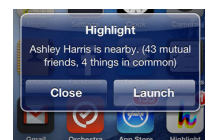
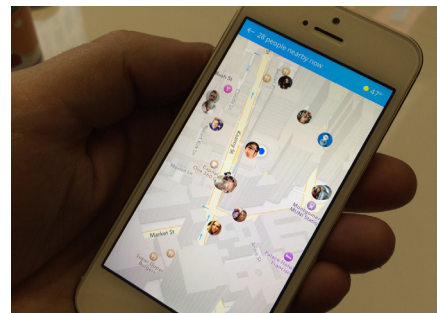
Infographic adapted from an older one created by Andrea for a 2013 Power Point presentation. Here, the schema has been expanded further: the interface does not only mediate between the user and art in the city, but it also mediates the interaction amongst many users around the experience of art activities in Milan.

together. In a similar fashion, curator Anthony Huberman in 'Take Care' (2011) made a proposal for exhibitions that function, 'as a way to discover, along with the audience' (Huberman, 2011, p. 11). He writes:

Traditionally, [...] curators open their shows and play the role of explicators, working to enlighten visitors who don't know what they know. They are expert performers of the I Know and avoid displaying any sign of the I Don't Know. Instead, an alternative curatorial behavior could be to embrace a more vulnerable relationship to knowledge. (HUBERMAN, 2011, P. 12)

Huberman develops this proposition further, trying to completely overcome this binary around expertise, addressing the curatorial policy of *caring*. Indeed, 'the affective curatorial approach of the *I Care* is described by Huberman 'as an act of appreciation [that], by nature, is not didactic – it's what you like, not what you know – but it is social: it involves not just what you like, but caring about it so much that you want to share it with others' (Huberman, 2011, p. 13). Along this line, I read *that's contemporary* as an *affective* exhibitionary space that stems from the use-value not only of individual user of the exhibition but also as result of using or, in this case, sharing the exhibition together.

The mobile app *Highlight* is a social networking app that was launched in 2012. In its first year of activity, the function of *Highlight* was displaying nearby users and shows things that they have in common.



The Self-Styled Hybrid Exhibition

In the construction of *That's App* we employed locative technologies¹⁴, most evidently the GPS blue circle indicating the geographical position of the user node in the customized Google map embedded into the app. The app was in this case reporting to its individual user nodes, their own position within the hybrid exhibitionary space of Milan. Yet, through the process of research, brainstorming and design, I have explored and discussed with my colleagues more ways that we could have used locative technologies to further inscribe exhibitionary pathways. However, due to the limited budget that we had available, these designs remained in the form of sketches and graphic layouts. Broadly speaking, I was working to develop structures and layouts in which user nodes would have contributed to the hybrid exhibitionary space according to two main locative propositions, which have been outlined by Marc Tuters and Kazys Varnelis in their essay 'Beyond

14 Locative technologies consist of GPS, Wi-Fi, RFID, Bluetooth, and telephone networks. They enable mobile devices such as smartphones, laptops and tablets to be location aware, which means that can detect and calculate the terrestrial position of people or moving objects carrying these technologies. When I refer to 'location' in relation to a device, I mean an 'absolute location' determined by a pairing of latitude and longitude coordinates in a Cartesian grid. In this sense, a location implies a position in geographical space characterized by a high degree of certainty. It is important to highlight that 'location' differs from 'place', which is instead an entity with ambiguous boundaries embracing social connotations such as identity and memories.

Locative Media: Giving Shape to the Internet of Things' (2006)¹⁵.

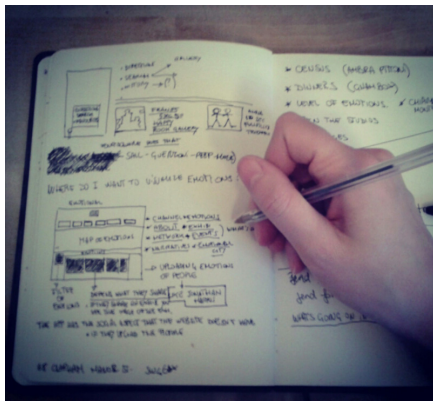
The first proposition is that locative technologies are *annotative*, which means that via linking geographic to informational space, users can virtually *tag* this space and, therefore, change, add or enhance meaning to specific places. The second idea is that locative technologies are *phenomenological* simply because by carrying mobile devices that have a GPS functionality activated, users self-report – and, therefore, *trace* – their own paths in space¹⁶. As Julian Bleecker and Jeff Knowlton noticed in the article 'Locative Media: A Brief Bibliography And Taxonomy Of GPS-Enabled Locative Media' (2006), the annotative

and phenomenological propositions ascribed to locative technologies are actually two facets of the same action, where a user might in fact *annotate* in order to *trace* his/her own passage and history in space and time.

I suggest reading these *annotative* and *phenomenological* features as curating strategies. Firstly, the annotative feature resumes the operation of *inscribing* exhibitionary networks in hybrid space via *tagging* places (i.e. place nodes) where art appears in Milan. Secondly, by annotating their own experience in space, users are themselves performing user traceability, which is the phenomenological feature of locative technologies (which I will explore further in the

second part of this chapter) as well as my research method discussed in the first chapter. Yet, while in the first chapter, strategies of annotating and tracing were consigned to me in the role of curator (tagging place nodes and event nodes) and *translator* (tracing the exhibitionary space through re-performing users' traces tracked by Google Analytics), they are in this conception at the disposition of any user.

The layouts for the app I sketched at the start of its development addresses

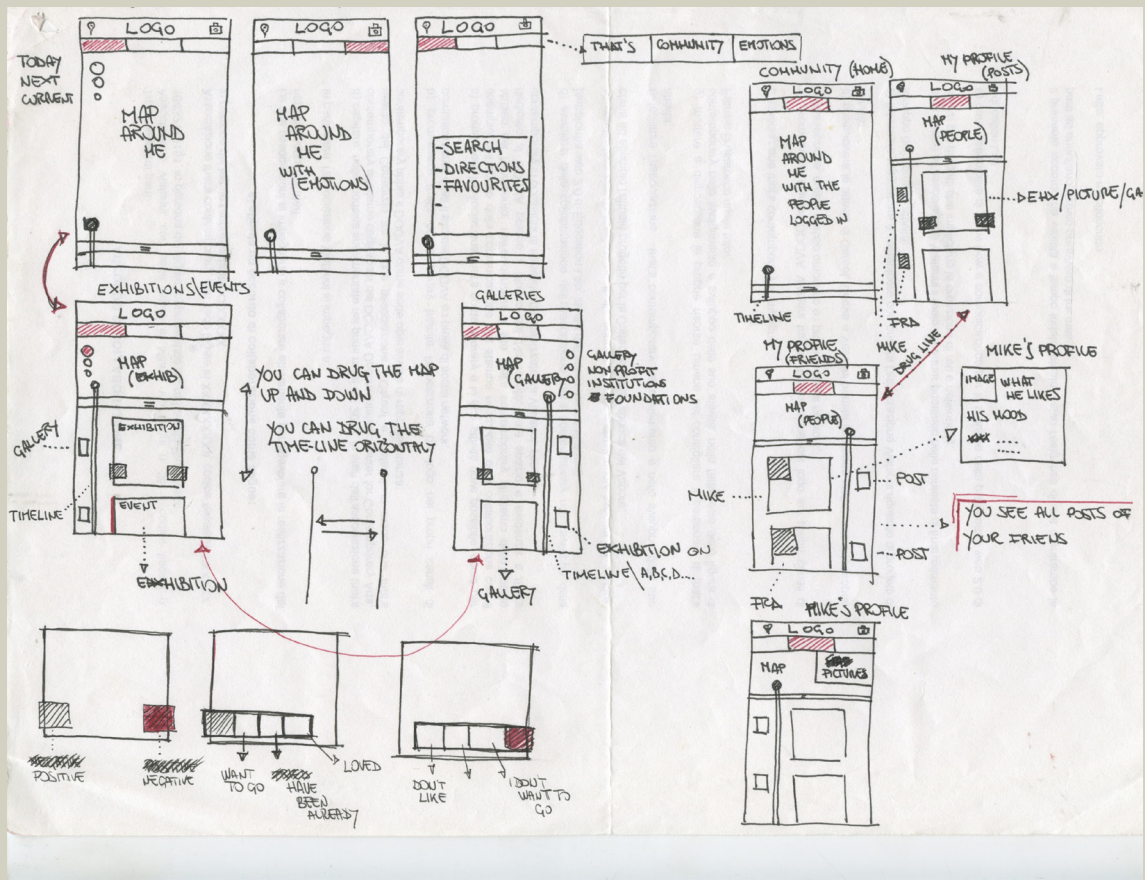


Sketching 'That's App'

15 Marc Tuters and Kazys Varnelis used the term locative media (and not locative technologies), referring to practices that, as Conor McGarrigle (2012) writes, 'seek to re-negotiate, re-imagine and re-enchant urban space through the application of locative technologies to develop novel and experimental methods for navigating, exploring, experiencing and being in the city' (McGarrigle, 2012, p. 12). Therefore, while locative media refers to *practices*, locative technologies are a set of technical enablers, the *medium*, on which locative curating practice thrives. As McGarrigle (2012) explains, the term locative media was coined by Karlis Kalnins at the event 'Locative Media Workshop: Mapping the Zone' in Karaosta (Latvia) to distinguish the creative use of locative technologies after becoming available, in 2003, not just for military, but also for civilian use. I do not use the term locative media because it was coined to indicate a series of emerging and experimental practice that occurred in a period before the absorption of locative technologies by mainstream social media platforms. Having developed my app along with the wave of commercialization of these technologies, I will refer to That's App as a location-based app.

16 In addition to the artistic and experimental locative projects that Tuters and Varnelis mention in their article, which took place between 2003 and 2005, the spread of locative technologies at a mainstream level occurred at the end of the decade. In January 2010, Twitter added the feature 'Local Trends' (Twitter, 2010) which allowed users to learn about the most discussed topics indexed with hash tags in a city. In August 2010, Facebook implemented the location-based functionality 'Place' (Hicks, 2010), allowing users to 'create places', meaning that they are the first person to index the existence of a particular venue. Both functionalities are examples of the annotative affordances enabled by locative technologies. Along with this feature, users could also start to 'check-in place', a phrase that indicates users self-reporting their presence in a particular place, referring to the the phenomenological functions of locative technologies. The implementation of these opportunities by Facebook and Twitter was an emblematic sign of the diffusion of hybrid spatial practices that were initially introduced by, at the time emerging mainstream social networks such as Gowalla (2007-2012) and Foursquare (2009-present), which constructed their community around users *curating* their own experience of space and the possibility of share this space with others.

CURATING ACROSS INTERFACES: AN ACCOUNT OF A (HYBRID) EXPANDING EXHIBITION –



CURATING ACROSS INTERFACES: AN ACCOUNT OF A (HYBRID) EXPANDING EXHIBITION –

this user activity of annotating while tracing in space and time, which would have been encapsulated in the section *Community* that could not be realized. In this section, rather than plotting event nodes, the map would have displayed (art) user nodes moving through the hybrid exhibitionary space of Milan. Here, the annotative and phenomenological aspects were both performed in order to engender the UIT exhibition. User nodes would have annotated their own 'attendance' to the hybrid exhibitionary space through geo-locating in a place node or directly in an event node and, in this way, letting other user nodes know about their own location in case of geographic proximity. User nodes logged in could have also simply leave their GPS functionality on, to let the app automatically trail their passage from one place node to another¹⁷. The section *Community* would have opened up a new way to *browse* the exhibition: instead of searching for adjacent place nodes, user nodes would have looked for other nearby user nodes to use the event nodes of the exhibition together in hybrid space.

This led to the attribution of additional significance to the role of users within the hybrid exhibitionary space. In my plans, user nodes would have gained a public identity via the app. Their identity would have been formed by their past and future attendance to place and event nodes, in other words, their appearance in the exhibitionary space would have coincided with their participation in it, which would have been stored and displayed on the app. Along this line of thinking, I have started considering how to harvest and plot user-generated content related to my exhibition. To a very conjectural degree, I have included this concept in my designs of *That's App*, with the section *Emotions*. In *Emotions*, I considered the possibility of utilizing data-mining software (embedded in the app) to harvest and categorize art-related content produced by user nodes (across multiple social networks and in geographical proximity of place nodes entered into the *that's contemporary's* database).

The section *Emotions* was an attempt to curate user-generated material and produce a real-time cartography of user's emotional reactions to the exhibitionary network of place nodes and event nodes of *that's contemporary*¹⁸.

17 This configuration echoed a new trend on a number of social media formats around 2012. Characterized by different mechanisms and degrees of privacy, they were conceived to facilitate encounters amongst users in physical space through alerting other users with similar affiliations (such as friends, fan groups or interests) about their nearby presence, often combining users' connections to Facebook or Twitter. Apps deploying these locative functionalities are known as social discovery apps and many of them have been marketed as dating apps.

18 This curatorial-driven software was inspired by the panel discussion *Calling Upon*, organized by Via Farini-in-Residence in May 2012. One speaker, the architect Paolo Patelli presented his design -based investigation on the ways user-generated information can be deployed to reprogram the geography of urban space. Patelli presented a series of experiments with digital traces related to Milan and Rome documented in the paper 'Polyphonic Images of the City' (Simeone, Lupi, Iaconesi, 2012). These experiments aimed 'to collect, analyse and represent real-time data on an urban scale, in order to intercept, uncovered needs and desires of knowledge about contemporary urban phenomena' (Simeone, 2012, p. 1). One of these experiments, *Visualizing the City* (2011) consists of 'a platform that harvests and integrates real time data streams coming from geo-localized user generated content and then applies text mining processes in order to extract users' emotional reactions and plot them on a map' (Simeone, 2012, p. 1). In November 2011, *Visualizing the City* was used to analyze 'users' emotional temperature' in Milan and Rome in response to the political event of Silvio Berlusconi losing his parliamentary majority with Mario Monti. The software monitored and extracted 'user's narratives, emotions [...] as crystallized into real-time information streams

To make this possible, through a pop-up window appearing on users' devices, we would have asked permission from our user nodes to harvest data (such as emoticons, tweets, message headers, profile statuses and search data) from their updates across multiple social networks. Hypothetically, individual updates would have been associated with an emotional status and gathered with other similar updates to interlace into a series of emotional networks, plotted on the app in the form of clouds. The result would have been another exhibitionary space in the app representing social and emotional networks activated by the presence of art in Milan. Yet, such representation would have changed according to the search criteria selected by each user node or related to their past history or simply according to their geo-localization. In fact, with *Emotions* user nodes could have chosen which place and event nodes to use in relation to which type of emotional reaction they were searching for. In this sense, That's App would not have displayed one exhibition, but as many exhibitions as users¹⁹. The hybrid exhibitionary experience would have not only formed in an interdependent relation between the physical space and a layer of information, but this informative layer would have been created by user nodes individually related to their *traces*. The exhibition was, in this sense, customized with each use, user-by-user.

Stephen Wright suggests that art-related practice takes on a 1:1 scale, which could be said to act as a description for this type of exhibition. To explain this, it may be useful to give an extract from Lewis Carroll's story, *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (1893) that Wright applies to show an example of a 'full-scale' practice. In the story, using physical space as its own map is a better solution than using a scaled-down schema of the actual space itself:

We very soon got to six yards to the mile. Then we tried a hundred yards to the mile. And then came the grandest idea of all! We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of a mile to the mile! (...) It has never been spread out, yet (...) the farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So now we use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well. (CARROLL, 1983, QUOTED IN WRIGHT, 2013, P. 3)

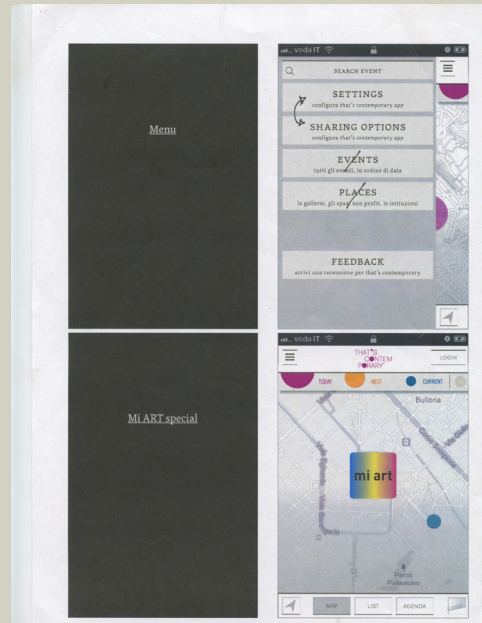
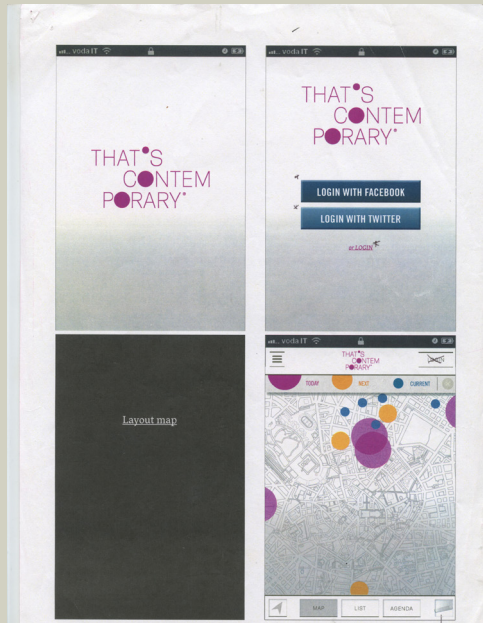
coming from social platforms (like Twitter, Facebook, Foursquare, Flickr)' (ibid, p. 1). In other words, this software curated geo-located information generated by users inhabiting the hybrid exhibitionary space of this representation of the city; an emotional cartography assembling and plotting user-generated material.

19 Adriana de Souza e Silva and Jordan Frith in *Mobile Interfaces in Public Spaces* (2012) gave an example of a location-based interface that produces an experience comparable to this concept of multiple 'exhibitionary experience' displayed on the same interface. They write, 'when using [...] *AroundMe*, a person can find nearby restaurants. But if somebody else opens the same application in the same location, but searches instead for coffee, she will get different results on her mobile phone screen. Both people are using the same application, but because they establish different search filters, they will download different information from the database of information that is around them—but never the whole database' (de Souza e Silva and Frith, 2012, p. 7-8).

As Wright comments on this story, 'whatever it may mean to use the country itself, as its own map, and however it may be done, one thing is sure: it provides an uncannily concise description of the logic of art on the 1:1 scale' (Wright, 2013, p. 3-4). Now, let's get this straight: locative technologies *do* actually map the whole territory *but* differently from Carroll's map, the informational map does not shut out the sunlight because, even though it lays on the surface, this map does not leave any tangible traces. In *Headmap Manifesto* (1999), Ben Russell already wrote that an informational locative map is about 'leaving notes, demarcating spaces, and marking places, but leaving no external visible sign of having done so' (Russell, 1999, p. 4). Therefore, the informational map is invisible and, at the same time, ubiquitous within the territory. According to Wright, in 1:1 scale initiatives, 'representation not only refuses to be subordinated to its subject, it is also interchangeable with it, and even superior' (Wright, 2013, p. 4). This last sentence is peculiar because the proposition of curating in hybrid space is not to create a distinguished map that is 'other' and, even 'superior', to its territory, but an interface where an over-laying of location-sensitive information merges with the territory, making it different, perhaps for some users more appealing than before this informational layer was laid down. In this operation, as Wright writes, 'the ontological discontinuity between map and land [...] disappears' (ibid, p. 4).

Therefore, Wright saying that 1:1 scale art-related practice, in which the territory and the map become inseparable in *use*, suggests the paradigm of curating in hybrid exhibitionary space. Yet, there is another point that needs to be highlighted, that this hybrid exhibitionary space is, 'made to function on the 1:1 scale as its own self-styled cartography' (ibid, p. 4). This means that the hybrid exhibitionary space shapes itself in *individual use*. The exhibition, each time it is used, merges with an informational map whose customization is dependent upon individual users' dispositions and interests, geographical and temporal positions and, as in the section *Emotions*, upon how event and place nodes have an affect on user nodes. Beyond the section *Emotions*, providing That's App with a self-styled map mechanism would have allowed a curatorial system to highlight aspects of space according to user nodes, rather than making just one representation of the all surrounding space. Each user node could have actualized some, and not all, aspects of a location. That's App would have contained multiple user-customized exhibitionary networks – as many as the number of users – and, at the same time would have been one exhibition as the the outcome of collective use.

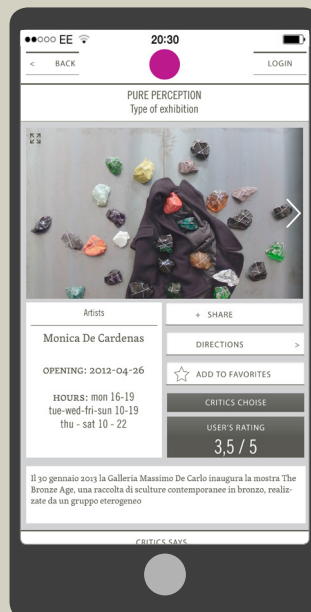
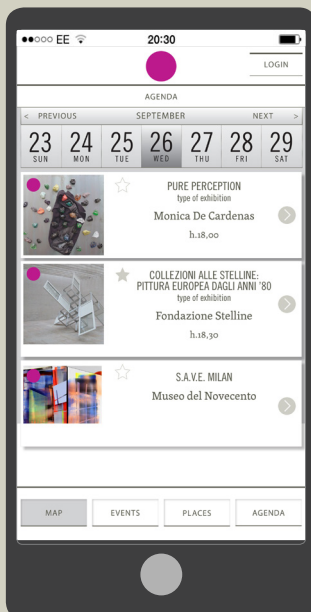
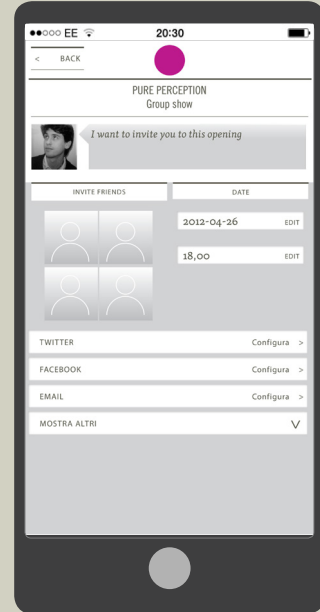
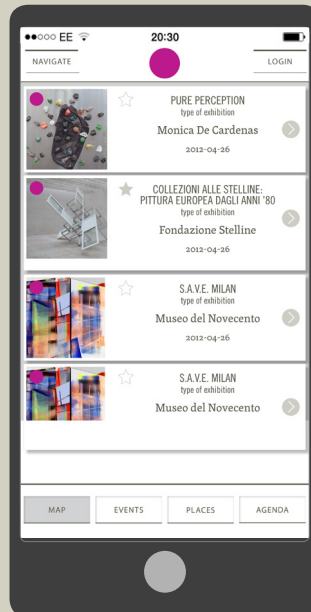
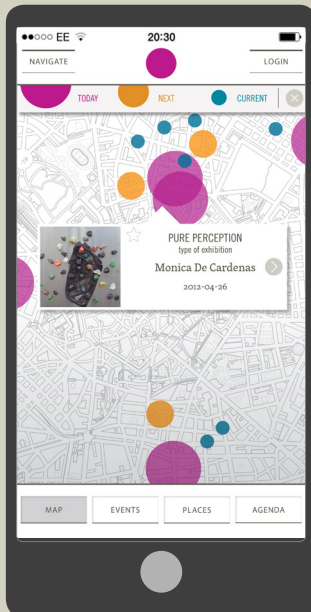
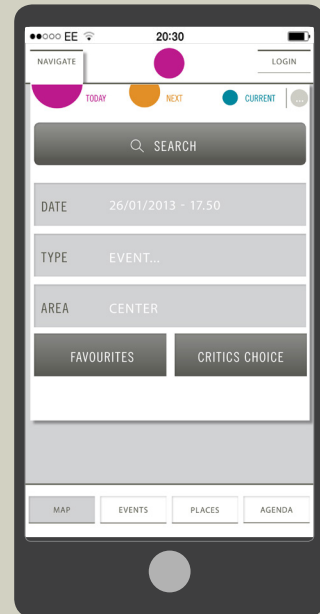
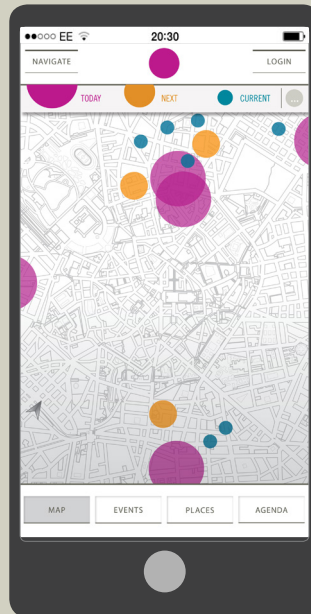
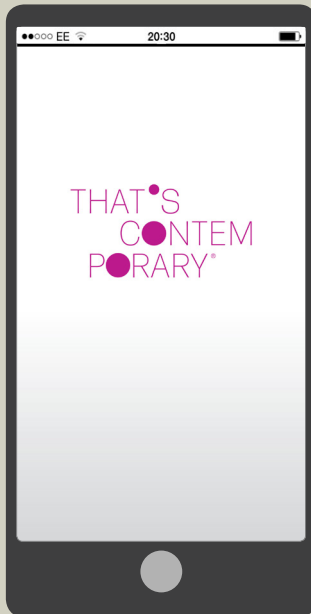
USER NODES



Work-in-Progress for the first layout of That's App, August 2012.

CURATING ACROSS INTERFACES: AN ACCOUNT OF A (HYBRID) EXPANDING EXHIBITION —

SECOND CHAPTER



Work-in-Progress for the first release of That's App, October 2012

SECOND PART: USING THE MOBILE EXHIBITION

NETWORKED SPACE (ACCOUNTING THE EXHIBITION IN MOBILITY)

In the following sections of this chapter, I intend to further elucidate the hybrid exhibition space brought about by That's App. In doing so, I will account for a series of hybrid exhibitionary networks unfolding in mobility, employing Jenny Kennedy's spatial concept of a 'networked space' in 'Conceptualizing Social Interactions in Networked Spaces' (2012).

For Kennedy, space is generated in 'intersections of interactions' between online and offline spaces (Kennedy, 2012). Space is produced by the generation of social relations that stem from who and what inhabit (hybrid) space. Kennedy's concept is based on Doreen Massey's understanding of social space as examined in *For Space* (2005). Here, space is structured around three main principles which she asks us to understand as follows:

First, [...] we recognise space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions [...] *Second*, that we understand space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity. Without space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space. If space is indeed the product of interrelations, then it must be predicated upon the existence of plurality. Multiplicity and space as co-constitutive. *Third*, that we recognise space as always under construction. Precisely because space on this reading is a product of relations-between, relations which are necessarily embedded material practices which to be carried out, it is always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never closed. Perhaps we could imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far. (MASSEY, 2005, P. 9)

In this passage, Massey discusses space as a product of interrelations occurring between the users of space. As it is generated by such interrelations, it is always in a process of becoming rather than existing as a static entity. This evidently returns to my understanding of the word 'exhibitionary' referring to an exhibition in a continuous process of unfolding. Given this understanding of space, Kennedy highlights the fact that users are *enactors* of this interrelated network (i.e. the networked space) that exists within the simultaneous contexts of physical and digital space.

I use the concept of networked space because it is bound to the concept of Actor Network Theory and strengthens the idea of hybridity between online and offline. Networked space is similar to ANT; firstly because it understands space as an entity that does not exist prior to humans, non-humans and their

reciprocal relations; secondly, because it functions as a method for taking into account multiple interactions. As I will underline, networked space is about narrative as well as about describing. It can be seen as an actor network particularly suitable for recounting - or *tracing* - situations in which users employ locative technologies and in which users' physical location is integrated within their digital activities. Besides, networked space describes relations between offline actions every time a digital device is used, whether engaging with locative functionalities or not. This is because a user operating online is inevitably situated in a physical context, they interact with offline actions that can impact on the experience and perception that users make with physical space. Kennedy describes this as a space of *converged contexts*, where one context inevitably refers to the physical environment in which users are located and the others as produced by users' interactions with various software and hardware interfaces. Yet, 'context' here is not considered as something that describes a setting, but is an interactional activity from which the networked space arises, in a way context is something that a user *does*. It is amongst innumerable contexts - where social interactions overlap and crisscross - that the networked space arises (Kennedy, 2012).

Another important aspect is that Kennedy understands networked space as a method rather than an outcome, one that requires a 'phenomenological approach' as each context is considered to be in a dynamic relation to others. This approach is explained by the author when she argues that each context, 'can be analyzed for how it might shape or be shaped by the other interactions occurring within the same networked space thus acknowledging multi-modal behaviour' (ibid, p. 28). For example, a whatsapp conversation, which is a context in itself, might impact on a user's attention, mood and disposition to act in a particular way and all of these changes affect the way users inhabit their own social space, which unfold in a hybrid condition. For example, if I receive a message from a friend saying that it will be raining in the afternoon, I would pack an umbrella before leaving home. A phenomenological analysis would look at the two contexts I was occupying and explore how my digital interactions on whatsapp impacted on my physical interactions. This dynamic could be reversed: I am about to leave home but, looking outside of the window, I notice some menacing clouds getting denser. This led me to pause my whatsapp conversation with my friend for a moment and check the weather forecast on my mobile phone. Beyond the ordinariness of these examples, what I want to highlight is that contexts are converged because they interact and shape each other.

Following Kennedy's line of thought, she stated that networked space is made from these *converged narratives*. As a matter of fact, when a context is recounted it is transformed in narratives. She writes:

If the interaction of subject to subject or subject to object can be viewed as a narrative, then a networked space is a space

produced in converged narratives. I propose the concept of networked spaces as a strategy for resolving the problematic binary of online and offline. Put simply the term networked space accounts for all sites both physical and digital in which interactions occur. Its use highlights the need for social interactions to be contextualized holistically. A networked space is a site of converged narratives. A networked space is not online or offline, but is produced in the convergence of multiple narratives of which there may be online and offline parts. (IBID, PP. 27-28)

This is in line with the thinking of ANT's theorists. An actor network is considered to be a *narrative* describing any interaction between actors (Latour, 2005, p. 128). Because interactions create space, not only is it collectively created amongst actors (or nodes), but we can also infer that accounting for these interactions means to delineate a narrative space – a space of *converged narratives*.

I intend to account for the narrative space of the exhibition by describing a multiplicity of social interactions unfolding, overlapping and intersecting between online and offline (i.e. hybrid) space. Specifically, I will 'follow users' interacting between each other along a network of interfaces – including That's App. To do so, I will invent a situation between Ann (the user created in the first chapter) and a new user, who I will name Giacomo²⁰. The objective is to perform the *use* of the hybrid exhibitionary space of Milan that stems from the script offered by That's App²¹.

The use of the script is described in relation to two situations. In the first phase, which is named 'ascription' or 'ascribed script', two user nodes organize an encounter at an event node for the evening through the use of That's App and a network of other interfaces. In this situation, users project their own program of action – which will be defined with the expression 'affordance' – onto the exhibitionary script. In the second situation, which I have named 'performed script', Ann will be actually using the script according to the ascriptions that she herself has assigned to it. Here, the hybrid exhibitionary space of Milan will be performed, *enacted*, in hybrid space as a result of intersections of individually ascribed and performed interactions. Or, to put it another way, what I am attempting to achieve through this thesis is to make a space of converged narratives that is, 'defined (and re-defined) in use' (Kennedy, 2012, p. 28).

20 The scenario I will picture is inspired by typical user behaviours. Besides, the exhibition used took place in reality, yet the actions and some features of the exhibition (such as the outside installation) are fictitious characteristics serving to perform of the exhibitionary space described in this thesis.

21 I presented a first version of this account at ISEA 2014 at Zayed University in Dubai. This conference paper, which I titled 'The Rise of Hybrid Exhibitionary Spaces', was published in the conference proceedings and it is available as appendix (n° VIII) or on Academia.edu at https://www.academia.edu/12835172/Baglietto_Francesca_2014_._The_Rise_of_Hybrid_Exhibitionary_Spaces._Conference_Proceedings_ISEA_2014_Zayed_University_Dubai

Ascribed Script (or ascription)²²

In the following scenario Ann and Giacomo are in Milan agreeing to meet at 6:30 pm on the same day for a private view in a gallery.

May 27th 2014

11.35 am

Giacomo from his office texts Ann:

"Let's visit an exhibition after work. Know anything interesting to see? Any PVs?"

Ann's phone – on the other side of Milan – beeps. Ann takes out her iPhone and reads the text. She had been really looking forward to visiting an exhibition over the last few weeks, but now she is too busy to check what is on. She texts, 'Ok! Take a look. If you choose well I'll join you ;-)'

Giacomo reads the text and starts to search. From the main menu on his phone he accesses the That's App homepage, which is a map-type interface. He starts to navigate through the map scrolling his finger up and down on the touch-screen. Giacomo spots a couple of pink dots – meaning that something is happening today. He taps on both dots to see if it is an exhibition he might like to see. He decides to suggest meeting Ann at Raffaella Cortese for the Karla Black solo-show, which also happens to be quite close to her office as well. Giacomo taps on the icon 'share' and the Apple standard pop-up menu appears. The window provides options for sharing Karla Black's private view via Facebook, Twitter, email or text. He decides to opt for emailing Ann and therefore, taps on the icon 'email', which re-directs Giacomo to the mail app on his phone. An email window appears containing an automatic message:

22 Akrich and Latour in 'A summary of a Convenient Vocabulary for the Semiotics of Human and Nonhuman Assemblies' (1992) have defined the term 'ascription' as, 'the attribution process through which the origin of the activity of the setting is finally decided in the setting itself' (Akrich and Latour, 1992, p. 262). They also define the term 'setting or setup (in French a 'dispositif')', as 'an assembly of human and nonhuman actants where the competences and performances are distributed' (Akrich and Latour, 1992, p. 259). In this thesis, I refer to the concept of 'setting' with the term 'performed script' that conveys the idea of a script used in space (where the actions suggested in the digital space of the app are enacted in physical space). In this section, the attention is put on understanding the phase antecedent to the setting or performance of the script, which is, precisely, the moment in which the user *ascribes* actions to the script in order to perform it, no matter whether in accordance with my prescriptions or not.

Hello,
I found Karla Black at Raffaella Cortese
on that's contemporary via That's App!
Do you want to go with me?
<https://www.thatscontemporary.com/event/9819>

Karla Black
28th May – 13th Sep 2014
Private view: 27th May, 6 pm

@Raffaella Cortese
Via Alessandro Stradella 1,
20129 Milano
Tue - Sat
3 – 7.30 pm and by appointment

Sent from my iPhone

Once Ann receives the email, her phone bleeps to inform her
there is a new message to read.

Subject: Karla Black at Raffaella Cortese
Sent by Giacomo Rossi

While reading the email, she clicks on the link included in
the email that sends her directly to the event profile on www.thatscontemporary.com. Ann quite likes the look of the exhibition
and emails Giacomo back:

'Great! See you in front of the gallery at 6.30'
Giacomo: 'Ok, See you there! x x x'

In this brief sketch, Giacomo and Ann dispatch roles, appointments and
performances in a space and time trajectory. With their texts, they approve a
quasi-contract with the phone equivalent of a handshake that ties them up into
a program of actions that they are supposed to follow in order to successfully
meet at 6.30 pm in front of the gallery in Via Stradella 1.

Their arrangement to meet at 6.30 pm has been upon using instructions
dispatched by That's App. The app provided the two user nodes with an enlarged
exhibitionary space for them to engage with, made of a series of exhibitionary

event nodes in Milan. Once they decided upon one, they were also given the address and opening times that they require to reach the agreed place node of Raffaella Cortese Gallery on the right date and at the right place. As a matter of fact, if the information were wrong they would have been sent to another part of the city, or if this particular exhibition had been missing from the exhibitionary space, Giacomo and Ann might have chosen to see another show, or they would have gone to the cinema, or perhaps they would have met another day. In this regard, it is reasonable to say that the combination of the app's script and the users' agreements create a shared *exhibitionary script* that dwells between the *script* that I have curated and the *affordances* that Ann and Giacomo *ascribe* to this script²³. Therefore, while the app is the product of a *script* created by the author curators of the app; the *ascribed script* is the program of actions that Giacomo and Ann have agreed upon, thanks to the capacities of the script to respond to the dispositions and desires of the two user nodes. Therefore, the 'ascribed script' is the plan of action that emerges from the affordances that users ascribe to the hybrid exhibitionary space of the city (mediated by the app). In this mediation, the informational map and the physical territory have merged into each other forming a full-scale cartography, that is the hybrid exhibitionary space. This means that, once Ann and Giacomo have decided upon their shared ascribed script – in other words, once they have invested in the UIT exhibition – the two user nodes are attached to a program of actions in which the exhibition is projected in an upcoming scenario and exists at the level of the user's perception, i.e. what users – the potential enactors of the hybrid exhibitionary space – perceive they can do in physical space.

Performed script

Now, the agreement has fixed a place and a time for the two user nodes to meet. Unless something unexpected happens, the ascribed script is supposed to *translate* into a *performed script* in which Ann and Giacomo will attempt to meet at 6.30 pm at Raffaella Cortese. In the following section, I will provide a narrative unit (that is a networked space) in order to expose the converged contexts of the scenario. I will then deconstruct – *de-scribe* – the same unit in order to untangle the intersection of (exhibitionary) interactions dwelling between the various *contexts*: the physical landmarks, the digital interface and Ann's sense of direction. Finally, I will draw my conclusion on the type of exhibitionary experience that these interactions have generated. The aim is to make apparent the computational ubiquitousness from which hybrid

23 The term 'affordance' was originally invented by the perceptual psychologist James Jerome Gibson (1977) to refer to the actionable properties generated by the relationships between a user and their environment. This concept has been further developed by Donald A. Norman (1988), who coined the notion of 'perceived affordance', which refers to the perceived and actual properties of 'things', specifically those fundamental properties that determine possibilities for how a 'thing' might be used (Norman, 1988, p. 9). Differently from Gibson's interpretation, in Norman a perceived affordance, 'requires an agent to be aware of the affordance, either through direct perception or experience. Unlike the traditional definition, a perceived affordance is primarily a relationship between a user's cognition and the environment' (Nye and Silverman, 2012).

exhibitionary space stems and, in particular, the relationship between interfaces and the context in which they are embedded.

*

May 27th 2014

6.37 pm

It is 6.37 pm when Ann looks at the time on her phone while walking up Via Plinio, hoping that the route she has taken is correct. She has already informed Giacomo that she will be late – again. Nevertheless, she is hurrying as fast as possible so she doesn't leave Giacomo waiting for too long.

Turning into what she believes to be Via Stradella and, while this belief is concretized by the signpost that she has just glimpsed out of the corner of her eye, she checks Google map on her phone to make sure that she is going in the right direction. She thinks that even though it has shown she has taken the right turn, she could still be facing in the wrong direction.

On the screen, the blue GPS geo-location circle representing her in physical space, confirms that she is actually on Via Stradella – as the name of the street on the map is coinciding with the signpost that she just passed by on the corner. In a few seconds she realizes that the blue circle is moving in the right direction – this information affirms that she is on the right track, probably just one minute away from the gallery. There is also quite an unusual structure at the entrance of a building a few meters away from her; some people seem to stop and pause around it as well. 'It is probably an artwork that's part of the show. So, I guess I have arrived' she thinks. A few more seconds and the quasi-contract will be fully carried out: she enters the gallery and sees that Giacomo is there sitting on a bench, typing on his phone.

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In the performed script, Ann interacts with actors that were not mentioned in the previous virtual conversation with Giacomo. The performed script involves physical actants such as signposts in the street and the sculptural object in Via Stradella; other actants that are virtual such as the time displayed on Ann's phone and the blue GPS geo-location circle; as well as some that are cognitive such as Ann's cloudy memory of being on that street when she previously visited the gallery a long time ago. Even though, in their previous digital chat, Ann and Giacomo do not bring these actors into conversation, in the performed script

they order ways of proceeding regulating changes in space, and moves from one place to another. Along the journey they create a hybrid exhibitionary network (or a hybrid exhibitionary networked space), where actors are all nodes. Actors in the network are not just a digital or virtual representation of things in physical space. Unlike the exhibitionary network accounted for in the first chapter where Ann used the platform from a stationary computer, the exhibitionary network unfolds through delegations that connect digital actors to non-digital actors. In this actor network, all actors work towards Ann's aim of reaching the event node. I will de-scribe the delegation of actors within this network.

Ann, despite not being familiar with the area can orient herself by being attentive to signposts on street corners informing passer-byers that they are on Via Stradella. Nevertheless, to confirm that her direction of travel is correct, Ann, while walking, controls her navigation as tracked by the blue GPS geo-location circle on Google map, which is supposed to be unequivocal unless the GPS signal on her phone is weak or the GPS functionality is setup incorrectly. Supposing this all works well, the virtual localization is definitely showing her real geographical position and direction. Eventually, the correspondence amongst her assumed position given by her sense of direction, the definite position informed by the blue GPS geo-location circle, the street signpost and, of course, the gallery's address initially provided by That's App (which she might have checked before leaving the office) weave the chain of delegations confirming that she is in the right place. In this hybrid exhibitionary network, the location of the event node, as given in an address and visualized on a map in That's App, has been linked through Ann's eyes to the street sign that reports the street name and its virtual correspondence on the map. And, given the phenomenological approach suggested by the networked space in accounting for such converged contexts, another node is in play as a final confirmation that Ann has reached the gallery, which is her familiarity with the aesthetic and social forms of contemporary art. Due to the shape of the structure in front of the building and the group of people that is congregating around it, she has been able to establish that it is probably an artwork and thus, eventually, assumes that the gallery must be just a few meters in front of her. As a matter of fact, the blue GPS geo-location circle is now positioned upon the pin indicating the gallery in Via Stradella, ²⁴.

24 In this hybrid exhibitionary network, I have connected digital devices to *things* that are not enmeshed with codes. Although this characteristic is implicitly embraced by both ANT and the networked space, I was also inspired by Keller Easterling's proposal in the e-flux article 'An Internet of Things' (2012). She poses the question of, 'how space, without digital or media enhancement, is itself information'. She writes, 'We are not accustomed to the idea that non-human, inanimate objects possess agency and activity, just as we are not accustomed to the idea that they can carry information unless they are endowed with code/text-based information technologies. While accepting that a technology like the mobile telephony has become the world's largest shared platform for information exchange, we are perhaps less accustomed to the idea of space as a technology or medium of information – undeclared information that is not parsed as text or code. Indeed, the more ubiquitous code/text-based information devices become, the harder it is to see spatial technologies and networks that are independent of the digital' (Easterling, 2012). Here, Easterling suggests moving attention from digital networks to 'analogical' networks for capturing those flows of information that happen independently through digital devices, and that are becoming more and more difficult to grasp due to the increment of ubiquitous technology. To support her argument, Easterling borrows from Christopher Alexander's article 'The City is not a Tree' (1965), which describes urban spaces as an informational field where urban inanimate objects interact amongst each other. Alexander's analysis

By following Ann heading to the gallery, I have traced one of the chains of delegations that allows the ascribed script to be performed in hybrid space. Put in other words, through unfolding this actor network (or intersection of interactions), I have performed *use*, i.e. the performed script, which I produces the hybrid exhibitionary experience of Milan. What is worth reiterating is that *use* itself is produced through the process of ascription, which is precisely, the reason users act in certain ways, for example taking one route rather than another. Ann continuously operates ascription along the progression of her own exhibitionary experience proceeding back and forward between the app and her physical context. She keeps ascribing sense to her geographical position (in the aim to reach the gallery) via the many markers at her disposal while the exhibitionary experience is performed.

NETWORK CURATING THE EXHIBITION

Now, I will focus on the event node at Raffaella Cortese and show how it connects to other nodes outside the space of That's App thanks to Giacomo's interactions. The next narrative unit will follow Giacomo, who while waiting for Ann in the place (node), is not only crowdsourcing information about the Karla Black show on the Internet but he is also tweeting a photo he took of the exhibition. Therefore, the following section aims to trace the formation of a hybrid exhibitionary network as a result of Giacomo's *network curation*. As discussed in the introduction, I have coined the term network curation to refer to a collective process in which users curate whilst using the exhibition, thus expanding the exhibitionary space beyond the original script conceived by its initial author curators. Giacomo will be discussed in this way, 'network curating' the exhibitionary space through uploading his own picture with a comment on his Twitter profile. Furthermore, Giacomo will be doing so while he is physically in the gallery, which means network curating in a condition of hybrid space. The outcome will be to illustrate how the hybrid exhibitionary space is social and co-curated by a collective of users operating in converged contexts as a result of the multiple uses of the script.

To support this thesis, I will readdress the concept of 'script', 'ascription' and 'performed script' and contextualize them within Henry Lefebvre's spatial trilogy in *The Production of Space* (1974) in which, as with my evaluation of Massey

shows a compelling example of an informational network created by physical signs interacting in urban space. He writes, 'in Berkeley at the corner of Hearst and Euclid, there is a drugstore, and outside the drugstore a traffic light. In the entrance to the drugstore there is a news rack where the day's papers are displayed. When the light is red, people who are waiting to cross the street stand idly by the light; and since they have nothing to do, they look at the papers displayed on the news rack, which they can see from where they stand. Some of them just read the headlines, others actually buy a paper while they wait. This effect makes the news rack and the traffic light interactive; the news rack, the newspapers on it, the money going from people's pockets to the dime slot, the people who stop at the light and read papers, the traffic light, the electric impulses which make the lights change, and the sidewalk which the people stand on form a system – they all work together' (Alexander (1965), quoted in Easterling, 2012).

(2005), space is interpreted as a social construction collectively produced in use.

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May 27th 2014

6.25 pm

Giacomo arrives at the gallery five minutes early. While he is walking in through the door, his phone beeps. It's a text from Ann: 'I am 10 minutes late. Sorry!' Giacomo texts her back: 'Ok. Don't worry! See you in a bit!' So, he decides to wait sitting on a bench in the entrance hall where he can unhurriedly access the blog entry he bookmarked this morning containing a review about the exhibited artist. Reading through the article he realizes that it discusses the sculptural objects located just in front of him.

He opens the Twitter app, takes a picture of the sculpture, attaches the image to a tweet he is about to launch. He adds a witty comment and a couple of tags to the image: #contemporaryart #milan #karlablack. He 'checks in' to the gallery so that the location is integrated with the image and comments and the tweet is ready to go.

Giacomo Franceschini

...contemplating mesmerizing sculptures connected by a yellow powder line while waiting for @AnnSmith... as always! J #contemporaryart #milan #karlablack at Galleria Raffaella Cortese

Giacomo checks if the tweet has been published and then clicks on the hash tag #karlablack. A stream of information about the artist Karla Black gathers together in a list of comments and images relating to this exhibition, but also to mostly past exhibitions, showing the artist's works through time and space.

Davide Tronzano @David5465

May 11th

#KarlaBlack you got me #modernart gallery

{ form + antiform }

artist inspiration:

materials used: sugar paper

Art * Texts * Pics @atpdiary

May 11th

Interview with the artist

#KarlaBlack @RaffaellaCortese

Sarah Batsche @sarah-1984

May 5th

10 artists announced #KarlaBlack

#studiovoltairealumni #NicoleEisenman

#HenryOlesen

Ann finally arrives at the gallery; they greet each other with a hug and a kiss on each cheek.

What is described above is a hybrid space of an event node produced in the intersections of online and offline (social) interactions. If such an event node was initially an entry on That's App, in this latest account, the same event node expands through other interfaces. The event node has been *socially* enacted by Giacomo together with a number of other user nodes. Henry Lefebvre has been pioneer in claiming that space is socially produced rather than being a pre-existent physical entity, meaning that those occupying space generate it. He writes, 'social spaces are not material things, but rather a set of social relationships both between objects and objects and people' (Lefebvre, 1974, p. 83). In particular, Lefebvre identifies three principles or modes of spatial production: *representation of space* (or *conceived space*), *spatial practice* (or *perceived space*) and *representational space* (or *lived space*). I will integrate these Lefebvrian terminologies respectively with the three stages that structure the enactment of the script: the (*conceived*) *script*, the *ascribed script* and the *performed script*.

Representation of space (or *conceived space*) is the demarcation of space by dominant groups in society. It is the space presented by urban planners and designers in the form of maps to denote, for example, a city, or its transport network. There is a correlation between conceived space and the concept of 'script' because conceived space is designed to affect the user behaviour in space in a predictive way, in other words, it is based on a pre-conceived exhibitionary script. The conceived space of the event node at *Raffaella Cortese* presents quite a conventional gallery script, which is the architectural physical structure of the white cube space, but also the textual arrangement of the press release, in which information is organized according to a particular style that is commonly used²⁵.

However – and, here, I will examine the second element of the triad – Lefebvre argues that space is produced not only according to a prescribed script, but also in the manifestation of *spatial practice* (or *perceived space*) referring to what users – the enactors of social space – perceive that they can do within this arena. In this sense, space does not precede activity carried out there; it is produced by

25 The lexical, grammatical, and stylistic features of art press releases have been analyzed by Alix Rule and David Levine in 'International Art English' (2012), an essay and digital project produced by Triple Canopy. In this text, Rule and Levine analyze a series of press releases distributed by e-flux to describe the language of contemporary art. Such analysis shows how the press release turns into an arena where the relationships between language, legibility, and power fashioning the art world are negotiated.

users conferring affordances to space, which is where the *ascribed script* emerges. For instance, the gallery in which Giacomo is waiting is collectively formed as this type of place because its users assume their experience in the gallery to be characterized by a series of affordances (i.e. actions that users perceive can be performed in a gallery) such as reading a press release, encountering artworks, talking about those artworks with others, but also taking photos to possibly tweet and post on their own profile or to simply exchange with friends. Simply put, these affordances are the user's appropriation of the conceived script, which coincides precisely with what I referred to as *ascribed script*. The operation of ascription changes in accordance with specific users' dispositions.

The third element of the triad is *representational space* (or *lived space*). In Lefebvre, it is explained as a combination between spatial practices and the representation of space. It is the result of a set of ascriptions that users project onto the conceived scripted space and that are in this way performed. It is space put into use. Users act in space while rearranging its meaning. In other words, users simultaneously act and ascribe in space. Therefore, *lived space* coincides with the *performed script*, which encompasses the script envisioned by designers/curators and the user's affordances ascribed to it.

Lefebvre's concept of lived space must be understood as being used through both physical and digital interactions. Therefore, lived, or social space is, in fact hybrid. Furthermore, it is in these terms that Giacomo's experience of the event node at *Raffaella Cortese* should be framed: a hybrid exhibitionary (lived/social) space. Giacomo's lived space of the event node unfolds in a situation of converged contexts formed by the SMS texts, the digital streams of tweets and the textual space of the press release he is reading. According to a phenomenological analysis of this exhibitionary space (where converged contexts make it a networked space), I can suggest that Ann's text carries a type of information, a delay of 10 minutes, that leads Giacomo to reflect on how to spend the following 15 minutes (he is indeed 5 minutes earlier) given that he would prefer waiting for Ann to see the whole exhibition together rather than spoiling the experience by seeing part of it on his own. Furthermore, he does not see any familiar faces around him to socialize with while waiting; so, Giacomo starts browsing additional information about the exhibition from his smartphone while being comfortably sat on a bench. The outcome of this exchange of texts has an impact offline, where Giacomo is led to eventually physically sit in the gallery and his visit actually starts with the navigation through this informational arena.

Through reading the blog entry, Giacomo becomes more aware of the sculptural objects in front of him to the point that he eventually takes a picture and tweets it online. This action delineates a re-display where the user is reproducing an image of an artefact with a physical existence and uploading this image on the Internet, eventually adding a new level of existence to the physical artworks. His experience in the physical exhibitionary space, contextualized

in a complex network of connected technological devices, has produced new spatial possibilities for these sculptures to exist. They multiply within an array of exhibitionary spaces scattered online.

The physical exhibition is 'transported' in the form of a tweet via digital flows that expand temporally and spatially through re-tweets, re-blogs, favourites, accompanying selfies, as it runs through twitter streams, appears in posts, likes, and word-of-mouths, but also temporally as it will be experienced by other users in different points in time. In this exhibitionary network, Giacomo becomes one of the many user nodes through which the exhibition grows and disperses. The 'exhibition' is, in this sense, distributed and indistinguishable from its network of distribution. The exhibition itself circulates and the *use* of the exhibition is a process of network curation. The more users, the more interactions, the more networked the exhibitionary space is and the wider it becomes. In this enlarged exhibition the task of curating is given to the network simultaneously inhabited by different users without any territorial contiguity. In this network, Giacomo is one of the many user nodes *using* the crowd sourced materials that are made available by others, such as the blog entry that he reads while being in the gallery, but at the same time, he is continuously fabricating a hybrid exhibitionary space that is made up of as much material as it links to.

In this sense, even though in this last section the focus of attention has been between the hybrid exhibitionary space of the city and a single event node within this enlarged exhibition, it is clear that what is at stake is the network curation of the larger exhibition, in which the single event node should be considered as a black box, as explained in the first chapter, or in other words, one of the interconnected actor networks taking part in the bigger exhibitionary network of Milan, with the global reach of the Internet.

THIRD CHAPTER

THE ART PACEMAKER – CURATING AN EXHIBITION ACROSS INTERFACES

144

CHAPTER OVERVIEW – In this chapter I will present The Art Pacemaker, a distributed and hybrid exhibitionary space that I curated with Giulia Restifo in Milan in 2013. We created this exhibition with artists Franco Ariaudo and Driant Zeneli, with the contribution of curator Marco Tagliafierro, videomaker Andrea Giannone, photographer Noy Jessica Laufer and volunteers Luca Piatto and Federica Roserba. The Art Pacemaker was a networked exhibition connecting thirteen (exhibitionary) nodes between artworks, exhibition installations and other undefined objects, which were

distributed between galleries, non-profit art spaces, foundations and public urban settings in Milan. These nodes were linked together by an exhibition tour guide – the pacemaker – followed by a group of thirty-five running participants. This flow of users moving from one place to another formed a 10 Km guided exhibitionary route traversing Milan.

This chapter will show how the exhibitionary space of The Art Pacemaker also expanded through the re-curation of this physical route on other digital and non-digital media. Although, the exhibition was organized to take place in Milan at a particular time on the 16th of March 2013, it actually took place over a distributed, undefined time period as it was curated also through multiple channels. For example, the project was broadcast both via FM radio frequency and online streaming as a part of the cultural program *SantiTime* hosted by *Radio Città del Capo* conducted by Piero Santi and Massimo Marchetti. It was also filmed, audio recorded and photographed to create a video documentary and a gallery of images, which were uploaded and published on the website as well as being shared via social media. A series of previews were published on the online Italian magazines *Exibart* and *Artribune*, which circulated on social media¹.

Taking into account all of these spaces where

1

See the Appendix V in the digital appendices for evidence of the expansion of The Art Pacemaker through multiple channels. It is available the official video of The Art Pacemaker, the voice recording of curator Marco Tagliaferro commenting the event and the entire press review, which includes articles about The Art Pacemaker and That's App. A selection of photos is included in this chapter.

The Art Pacemaker took place, I will describe the production of the exhibition by outlining the process of curating the scripts that this exhibition contains. Differently from the two previous chapters, these scripts were not ‘inscribed in’ and ‘prescribed by’ a digital interface. Rather, they were inscribed in the program of actions that were performed by the exhibition tour guide/pacemaker and by the exhibitionary collective of human and non-human actors that the exhibition was composed of. Therefore, I will first retrace the process of curating the physical distributed exhibition of The Art Pacemaker – i.e. the work of inscribing and prescribing in physical space. In doing so, I will consider as constitutive parts of the exhibitionary script not only the selection of artworks and other exhibitionary nodes but all information related to organization. Secondly, I will outline the construction of scripts that curated the *remediation* (Bolter and Grusin, 1999) of The Art Pacemaker into other media. This will show how the space of The Art Pacemaker developed through a *reversed* process where, what might be considered a ‘newer’ media is actually re-appropriate by an ‘older’ analogue or physical one. Here, the aim is not to force a categorization classifying media as ‘old’ or as ‘new’ but, oppositely, proposing a dialogical relation between them through which the exhibition indiscriminately enlarges. Bearing this in mind, I will

describe and discuss the production of four media scripts: the radio script, the video script, the social media script and the medal script. Finally, I will show how through the re-performance of these scripts, the chapter translates the hybrid exhibitionary space of The Art Pacemaker and, in this way, it becomes another remediation of the exhibition.



PREPARING THE GROUND FOR THE EXHIBITION

The Art Pacemaker was initiated by artist Franco Ariaudo, a project he had already partially piloted at the ‘Vetrinale’ Contemporary Art Festival in Rome in October 2012. It consisted of a tour of art spaces, mimicking the mechanisms of a marathon. The title ‘The Art Pacemaker’ borrows an expression from running language: the ‘pacemaker’ in a marathon is the support runner in charge of moving at a steady pace while providing instructions on the conduct of the race. Runners stick to the pacemaker in order to reach the finishing line according to the time indicated by the number written on the balloon tied to the pacemaker’s vest. Giulia and I curated a new version of The Art Pacemaker that as, on the one hand, it functioned as an analogical version of the distributed exhibition created by That’s App; on the other hand, it worked as an itinerant event node traversing the exhibitionary space of Milan. We established this connection by the fact that the figure of the pacemaker in a marathon acts as a sort of (guide) *interface* for participants mediating their movement in space and time. In The Art Pacemaker, this figure becomes a (guide) *interface* for art users: as I will better explain later in this chapter, the pacemaker *curates* users’ spatial experience of the exhibition by filtering and delivering geo-sensible information along the journey. Put in another way, the pacemaker mediates users’ experience by *prescribing* the exhibition to running participants and *inscribing* the exhibition in the space of Milan both actions occurring through mobility.

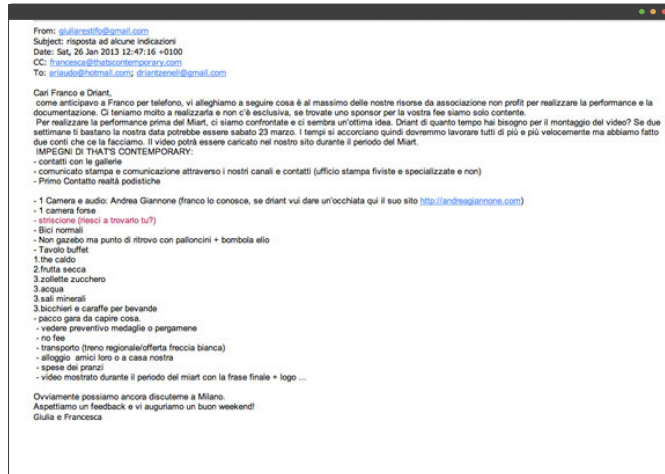
With this project in mind, we contacted Franco via email mentioning that we had seen documentation about The Art Pacemaker in Rome and that we would like to commission the project in Milan. Subsequently, after this first point of contact, we engaged in a conversation via email in which

Franco introduced us to the genealogy of the project (which, I will discuss later in this chapter). He also related his desire to work on a new version of the project in collaboration with artist Driant Zeneli, who would contribute with the creation of a video. Therefore, Driant was also added into the email conversation. Giulia and I asked the two artists to provide us with a list of actions, materials and resources that they thought the project and the video would need to be produced. Through this email exchange, Giulia and I could gain a picture of what was needed and roughly assess the expected production costs for the realization of the project. In light of this, I negotiated with the artist the conditions under which we could initiate the collaboration: given the tight budget available, we agreed that *that's contemporary* would not pay artist fees but that we would cover production costs and artists' expenses by taking from the budget previously allocated to the marketing costs of the app. This decision was also shared and agreed with the company Rottapharm | Madaus, whose funding sustained the production cost for the realization of That's App. We also agreed with Rottapharm | Madaus, that they would have visibility as their name would appear in any communication related to The Art Pacemaker; in exchange they helped with press office activities. Once we decided upon these partnerships, both with the sponsor and the artists, we decided to stage The Art Pacemaker in March just before miart, the Milanese modern and contemporary art fair. At the time, we were already in accordance with the fair that we would have a stand in the magazine section. We planned to present the app and use this opportunity to temporally and spatially expand the exhibitionary space of The Art Pacemaker by showing the video in our stand at miart.

The script of The Art Pacemaker started to take shape.

SCRIPTING THE PHYSICAL EXHIBITION

Giulia, the artists and I decided to stage The Art Pacemaker on a Saturday in order to avoid weekday traffic. Together we started to delimitate an area of Milan in which we could *script* this distributed exhibition. From the beginning, it was quite clear to us that the north of Milan would be suitable given the dense concentration of art spaces in the area, meaning that there would be a wide range of artworks to select from. To test our ideas, we drew different exhibitionary routes using Google Map. Initially these sketched routes encompassed different northern urban areas such as Porta Venezia, Loreto, Garibaldi, Brera and Chinatown. From the beginning we excluded the area of Lambrate because,



Initial e-mail between *that's contemporary* and the artists negotiating the conditions, costs and terms of involvements for the realization of The Art Pacemaker.



that's contemporary's stand at miart 2013.



despite the fact that it has a dense conglomerate of art spaces, we considered it too far removed from other areas with galleries and thought that it was too small to contain the whole exhibitionary route. It would also have limited our attempt, that was to reach a rich variety of art spaces, providing a differing range of artworks. Once we had a rough idea of potential routes, we walked their length to test them. On these walks, we first realized that if all of these areas and spaces were covered, the exhibition journey would last too long and there would be the risk that participants would not reach the finishing line. We decided to concentrate the exhibition on a reduced urban area around the metro stations of Porta Venezia, Lima and Loreto and to limit the number of artworks along the path. Another key concern that kept coming up was how safe would it be for participants to run on narrow sidewalks and to cross streets where trams circulate. Hence, we modified the journey on Google Maps trying to avoid the streets where the dimension and state of pavements seemed inappropriate and where expected traffic would obstruct the flow of running participants. This concern opened up a discussion questioning first, if it would be more secure to ask permission from the traffic police to close a couple of roads and, second, if we should limit the number of running participants.

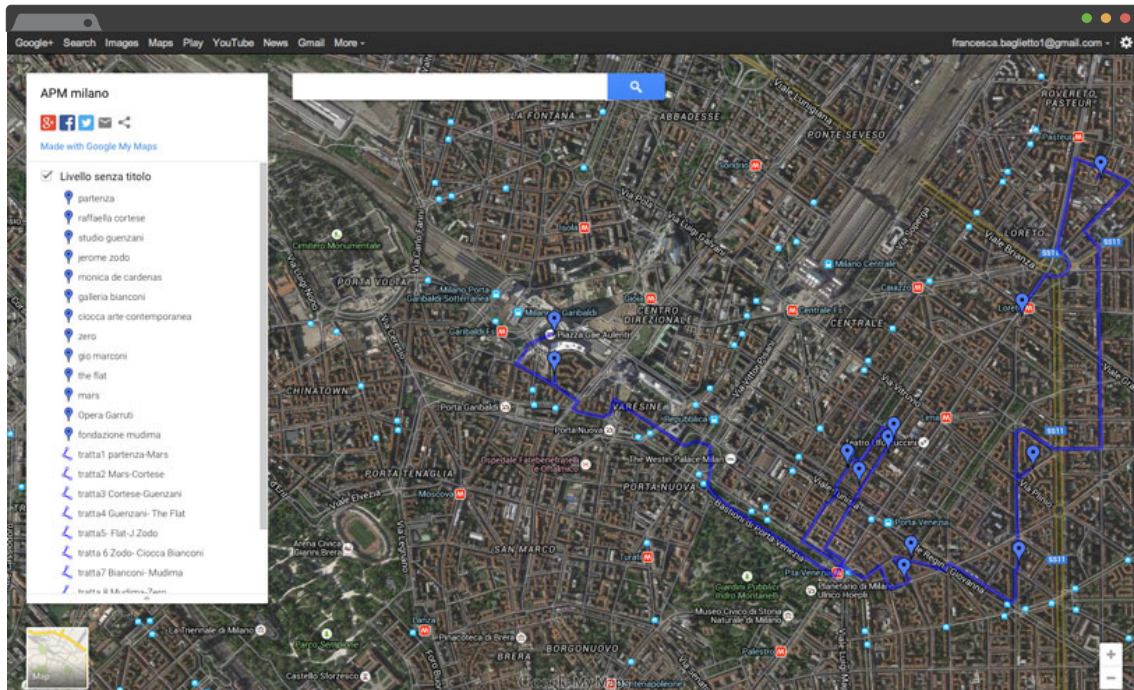


Email discussing the documentation needed to apply for the occupation of public space.

Eventually, after a series of discussions with the police over the phone and in person at the police station, Giulia and I decided with the artists to operate without closing any street but that we would limit the exhibition to thirty-five participants. Furthermore, Giulia would precede the group on a bike to signal the runners' arrival and, in case of necessity, ask passers-by to move aside to let the group flow.

Despite the detailed attention spent on the length and material conditions of the itinerary, the final route was determined by the availability of art spaces to participate in the project. At the beginning of January, I started communicating with commercial galleries, foundations and non-profits, to gather information about their exhibition programs for March. I first contacted art spaces already collated on the *that's contemporary* platform and app and then a couple of new spaces. The first selection criterion was, as explained before, geographical position. I excluded a priori any space that was outside the agreed area. I liaised with the managers and curators of these art spaces by carrying out email and phone conversations. I explained the project, their suggested participation and I requested information about the artworks that would be on show during that period. The feedback I received was generally quite positive. However, some art spaces strategically located along one of the most feasible exhibitionary journeys, were reluctant to take part because they did not have an exhibition open in March and did not like the idea of allowing visitors into the gallery space as it may be half empty or messy. I insisted that the focus was not necessarily on the exhibitions themselves but on connecting a series of individual artworks that the exhibition guide would pick out along the journey. I succeeded in persuading a couple of these hesitant art spaces to show just one artwork or a series of works despite an entire exhibition not taking place.

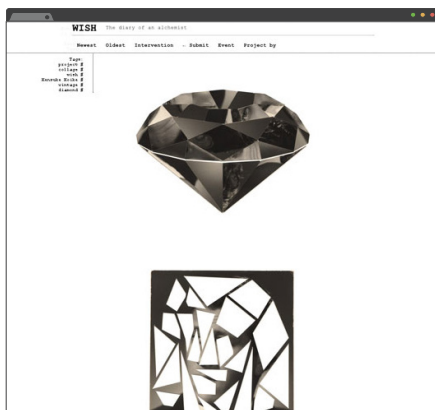
From these initial contacts, I collected information about exhibitions, artists and artworks, which I shared with the exhibition guide/pacemaker so that we could study them together to collaborately select artworks that he would like to engage with along the exhibition route. Initially, the intention was to try to connect artworks and inscribe the route with a theme. Yet, the idea of a thematic exhibition seemed to Giulia, the artists and I a slightly



The route inscribed on Google Map

vacuous curatorial effort. Therefore, like the ‘See also nearby’ function of the platform, the selection and order in which the works were encountered in the final journey did not have any preconceived theoretical connection, except their strategic proximity. Because of this, in this particular exhibition, semantic links between artworks were replaced by their nearness in space and time. The selection itself was subordinated to the fortuity of what was on show in that space in that month and then driven by the subjective aesthetic judgments of the pacemaker. In this sense, as with the construction of digital interfaces, the curatorial process, broken down into a series of affordances inscribed by the initial script, extended in an uncontrolled and unprescribed *modus operandi*. In the same way as the *that’s contemporary* database’s algorithms, the initial script of The Art Pacemaker – along with its set of rules – operated a distributed management system regulating the contingency inherent in the project.

Screenshot of the blog <http://wish-project.tumblr.com> documenting Kensuke Koike’s project, *Wish* that was presented at Ciocca Arte Contemporanea. The screenshot shows, *Broken Heart*, (2012), the artwork chosen for The Art Pacemaker.



The difference between ‘curating content’ and ‘curating systems’ as highlighted in the introduction, becomes relevant to show how in The Art Pacemaker the work of the curators – Giulia and I – focused on the curation of the exhibitionary system, while the curation of content was given to the exhibition guide/pacemaker. For this reason, I will not specifically analyze the artistic aspects of the individual artworks or outline connections between them. Rather I will recount how the selection of solely artworks that we initially *scripted*, expanded into a broader range of exhibitionary nodes. In fact, initially we only considered artworks present in the gallery for inclusion. Examples of these artworks are: a diamond made of charcoal by Kensuke Koike, titled *Broken Heart*, (2012) on

show at Ciocca Arte Contemporanea; a series of photos by Luisa Lambri, *Untitled*, (2012) which capture the reflection of light on a Donald Judd artwork available at Studio Guenzani; or a group of hanging metallic objects producing optical illusions by Markus Raetz, *Doppelpaar*, (2009-2010) at Monica De Cardenas. Then, at Fondazione Mudima, instead of a finished artwork, we preferred to include a stack of clay leftovers from undefined sculptural activities. At Zero gallery, rather of one single artwork, we selected the entire exhibition, which was an environmental installation titled *Sacco di Lavoro* (2013) by artist Hans Schabus, formed by several balls of clay laying on the floor and holes formed in the walls of the gallery. As well as this, we expanded our selection for our exhibition to works in public space: we picked out an artwork by Pietro Cascella dedicated to Giuseppe Mazzini (1974) in Piazza della Repubblica and *Egg* (2013) an artwork by artist Alberto Garutti in Piazza Gae Aulenti. By expanding the selection, The Art Pacemaker turned from a guided tour connecting art spaces and their exhibitions to an exhibitionary network linking a variegated range of nodes with different topologies and scales.

Once the spaces and the exhibitionary objects were fixed and time-schedule agreed, I contacted the art spaces again and announced the time that the group was expected to reach each stopover. I also informed them that in order to ensure that the journey was correctly organized, we would carry out a test without participants the day before the official exhibition. With Galleria Bianconi, which was located half way along the exhibition journey, Giulia agreed via a phone call that we would leave some bottles of water so that participants could re-hydrate, preparing them to face the second part of the exhibitionary route. With the help of a two volunteers, Luca Piatto and Federica Roserba, we also planned a feast of water, tea, dry fruit and nuts at the end of the journey, in Piazza Gae Aulenti, the square at the center of a new building complex owned by UniCredit Bank. In order to set up a table for the refreshments, we had to ask formal permission from the bank and be prepared to show authorization papers to the security safeguarding the complex.

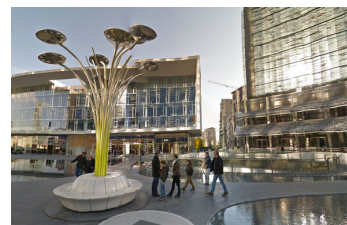
Meanwhile, I had to carry out the communication strategy for contacting potential participants. We tried to put together a mixed group of individuals targeting both experienced runners and art users. I searched for phone and email contacts of both running associations and art universities and academies in Milan. Because we wanted to reach these two different targets, rather than sending out a traditional exhibition press release, I wrote an announcement in a style that was halfway between a race bulletin



View of the clay leftovers from outside Fondazione Mudima.



Public sculpture, *Giuseppe Mazzini* (1974) by Pietro Cascella and its inscription, located in Piazza della Repubblica, Milan.



Screenshot of the Google street view of Piazza Gae Aulenti showing *Egg* (2013) the artwork by artist Alberto Garutti.

Formal request for the occupation of Piazza Gae Aulenti.

and an open call for participating in an exhibition. I highlighted the schedule and practical information for participants and explained that a distributed and mobile exhibition would emerge as a result of their involvement. I also attempted to express clearly the parallel between That's App and The Art Pacemaker by playing upon the claim that both were like *cicerone*. 'Cicerone' colloquially refers to a guide that is adept at conveying spatial information (i.e. inscribing an exhibitionary space)². It is feasible to say that Cicerone resumes the role of an *interface* that *curates* the experience of users in space. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, The Art Pacemaker and That's App share this role of curating as a way of inscribing and prescribing the exhibition thanks to a mobile interface that mediates between users and space. Despite the fact that the pacemaker is not a digital interface, the exhibitionary space emerges thanks to users following a script collated beforehand but that was prescribed on the move. In the experience of the user, the pacemaker worked as a type of emergent curator, which like a location-based app, provided locative information contextualizing exhibitionary objects (i.e. nodes) along the route. In this sense, the exhibition took form through a real-time, geo-locative filtering of exhibitionary nodes in space that were used in motion. The result was that the exhibition emerged in mobility.

Therefore, the performativity of the script present in the construction and application of the digital devices is concretized in The Art Pacemaker because performativity is not only *prescribed* but also *staged*. In other words, creating thatscontemporary.com and That's App meant to plan *use* through the operation of *inscription* and *prescription* of a script, but the actual use is left to the dispositions of users. Differently, in The Art Pacemaker, 'use' has not only been inscribed and prescribed but also *enacted*. As a result, rather than many routes freely performed by a plethora of unrestrained users navigating hybrid spaces via digital devices, The Art Pacemaker was (initially) scripted to perform one route to be physically traced, which was then re-curated multiple times using other media, as I will show in the next section. However, this single route stands as one amongst the many routes that users are afforded when using That's App. It is made visible through the fast-moving bodies running from one point to the next, whose role it is to enact an inscribed and prescribed route. The Art Pacemaker exists as a visual representation of curatorial network production since its exhibitionary spaces are engendered along a flow of users 'circulating the exhibition'.

2

The term 'cicerone' derives from the Roman orator Marcus Tullius Cicero, who was considered a master of Latin prose (Oxford Dictionary, 2015); since then, 'Ciceronian' became an adjective that signifies 'eloquence'. Here, the eloquence of the traditional cicerone is transformed in the capacity of the guide to deliver detailed and relevant information about the space.



SCRIPTING THE HYBRID EXHIBITIONARY SPACE

The script of The Art Pacemaker assumed that the exhibitionary space of the event was hybrid and the process of curating expanded into organizing the digital dimension of the project. This section will illustrate how the exhibition script coordinating actions in physical space merged with the scripts co-ordinating the re-curation of the physical exhibition in digital and other spaces through the production of the radio script, the video script and the social media script. It is feasible to say that in curating The Art Pacemaker we produced as many *scripts* as the types of media we activated to re-curate it. Yet, the following description(s) will show how the ‘media scripts’ absorbed and reiterated each other. Indeed, this process of re-curating the exhibition reassembles the concept of *remediation* coined by Jay David Bolter and Robert Grusin in *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (1999), which they describe as the representation of one media in another. The term emerged to refer to the process of digital media incorporating the forms of their predecessors such as television, radio, print journalism and other older media. They define remediation as ‘the mediation of mediation’ and say that, ‘[e]ach act of mediation depends on other acts of mediation. Media are continually commenting on, reproducing, and replacing each other, and this process is integral to media. Media need each other in order to function as media at all’ (Bolter and Grusin, 1999, p. 5). In my case, however, what is remediated is the physical exhibition of The Art Pacemaker within other exhibitionary media, i.e. radio, video and social media.

Radio script

The Art Pacemaker was broadcast on the radio with twenty minutes of live commentary by curator Marco Tagliaferro. This collaboration came about in a very unexpected way: Giulia and I were presenting the project to Marco without any particular agenda other than to make him aware of our activity during that period. Our presentation intrigued Marco to the point that we started examining the possibility of having an external voice reporting on the event unfolding. We realized that it would be quite useful to use his spoken commentary in the editing of the video that Driant planned to create. Both artists responded with enthusiasm to this idea, which led us to attempt organizing a live streaming on radio. Initially we thought about creating our own radio station with the online radio platform Radionomy, which enables users to produce, search and listen to online DIY stations. This service would have allowed us to create a radio station online for free with a range of tools to potentially implement podcast libraries, newscasts, weather forecasts and horoscopes. Although the service looked full of potential, we had to rule out this idea because it did not make sense constructing a station from scratch just to broadcast for one morning. Plus, this form of broadcasting would only have reached our own users, whereas transmitting information via an existing radio station would create an additional user-base. After a few days of research and asking around, Franco suggested getting in contact with Radio Papesse, a non-profit online radio station based

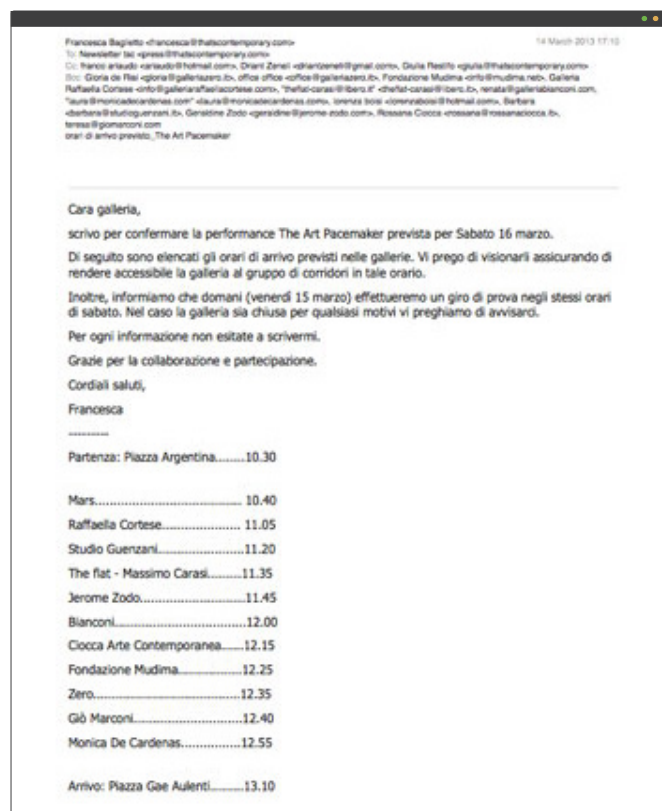
in Lucca that collaborated with the artistic residency Diogene in Turin, where Franco is one of the founders. After browsing the radio station on the web, I found that the broadcasts streamed 24 hours every day and that the station has an on-demand audio archive specializing in experimental audio productions, sound art, sound poetry and soundscapes. Reading through their 'About' page I could attest to the fact that the radio was very well connected in the contemporary art field given that they recorded collaborations with institutions such as Manifesta and the Liverpool Biennial. Their user-base was not stated on the website but, by looking on their Facebook and Twitter profile page, I could see from the number of likes and the frequency of comments, tweets and re-tweets that they did not seem to reach an extensive number of users, perhaps because of their emphasis on experimentation and limited resources typical of a non-profit organization. Hence, although we would have liked to reach a broader public, including non-experts, we came to the conclusion that this broadcaster would be a good space to host The Art Pacemaker, to get it recognized as an experimental model for forming an exhibition. I phoned the radio and their initial feedback about their potential involvement seemed very positive; we were all enthusiastic. However, we were soon informed that they would be prepared to archive a podcast of The Art Pacemaker, but they would not organize the live streaming of the event, which was an aspect of the exhibition that Giulia and I were not willing to give up on yet. We kept searching until, through Driant's personal connection, we were able to speak to the curator Massimo Marchetti, who was one of the contributors at Radio Città del Capo, an independent radio station from Bologna. Massimo used to regularly collaborate in the cultural program of the radio station *SantiTime*, curated and conducted by Piero Santi and transmitted every Saturday between 8.30 am and 1.30 pm on Radio Città del Capo. Massimo successfully agreed with the station to present The Art Pacemaker into the palimpsest of *SantiTime*, with a live streaming of 30 minutes between 11 and 11:30 am. Because Radio Città del Capo broadcasts via FM radio frequency in Bologna and is also streamed on the Internet, the exhibition audio space of The Art Pacemaker reached both FM radio users and the online users of Radio Città del Capo. Understandably, after intense days of collective search, The Art Pacemaker's team responded to this news with great excitement. In addition, a few days later, Giada Marsadri, a friend of mine working as a presenter on the Swiss public radio station RSI responded to my request to conduct live coverage of The Art Pacemaker with the counter proposal

Email conversations expressing the collective enthusiasm triggered after we found a suitable radio station available for The Art Pacemaker's live radio.



of carrying out a live interview on the radio just when the group was about to reach the finishing line of the exhibition, around 12.15 pm. We gladly also accepted this second opportunity.

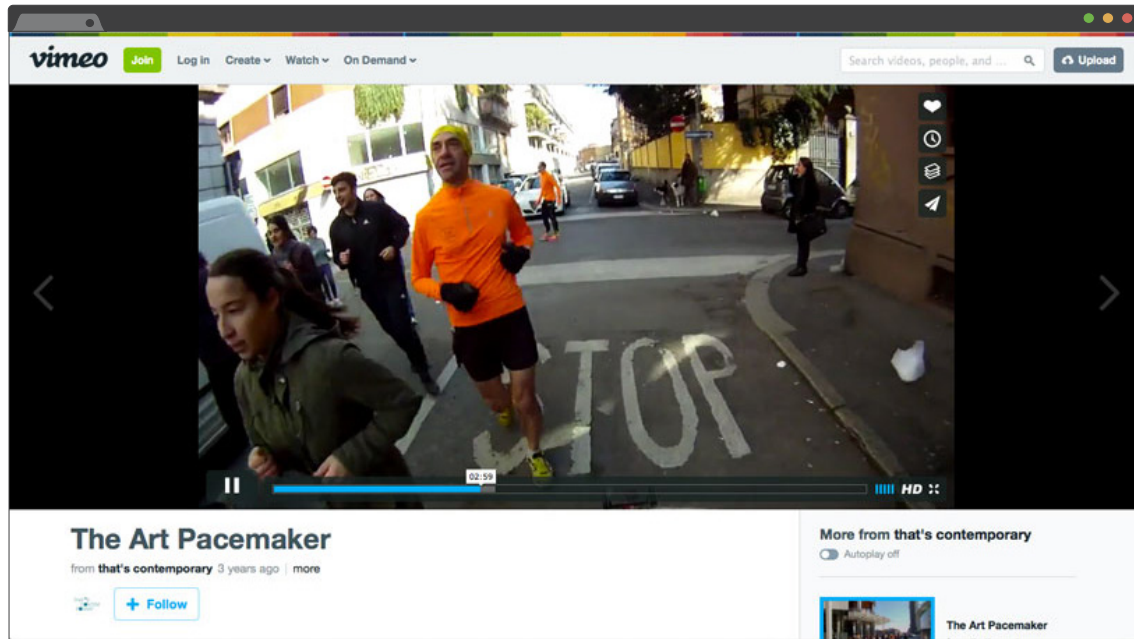
After setting up the arrangements for this coverage on two radio stations we had to shape the exhibition script in order to secure the smooth running not only of the physical exhibition, but also of the audio exhibitionary node. We agreed that Marco should act as the main reporter in the communication with Radio Città del Capo. He would pick up the radio's phone call around 11 am and engage in a conversation with Massimo and Piero, in which he would describe and comment on the actions of the mobile exhibition. In order to chase the group and document actions in accordance with the radio script, Marco would travel by bike, taking the phone call with a pair of headphones on.



Email sent to the art places with the final time schedule of 'The Art Pacemaker's route'.

Video script

While riding his bike, Marco would record his own comments using a wearable microphone during the whole exhibition. The recorded commentary produced by Marco, along with the live version from the radio, would be used along with the filming of the event to create a video documentary. In this way, the aim of the radio script fused with that of the video documentary script. This is not surprising as the idea of working with radio stations came out of the involvement of Marco, who was recruited to contribute to the audio of the video. The organization of the team and resources to produce the exhibition video started when Giulia contacted her ex-colleague, the video maker Andrea Giannone. As he was aware of the tight budget we were working with and, given that he already knew and, probably, appreciated the first version of The



Art Pacemaker, Andrea agreed to get involved and use his filming equipment without asking for a fee. We added Andrea to the email exchange with Driant and the script of the video started to take shape.

Screenshot of The Art Pacemaker's video on Vimeo.

I took note that we had to print and distribute personal consent forms for each participant to sign and hand in before the beginning of filming. The forms allowed us to lawfully capture, process and use footage portraying these participants. After clarifying this, the plan of action was that Driant would edit the video material taken by three different cameras and then add the commentary from Marco. We wanted this video to deliver a sense of the itinerancy of the mobile exhibition, using an action camera, which is typical in extreme sport videography. Driant would mainly be positioned at the back of the group with the action camera fixed to his helmet, filming the action of the exhibition while being immersed in it. In this way, the camera could capture the exhibition journey from the perspective of a user experiencing the exhibition. In addition to Driant's action camera, Andrea produced steady footage captured from different perspectives and angles using a professional camera secured to a tripod.

Giulia and I were in charge of ensuring that the running group and filmmakers were synchronized to achieve the necessary footage for the production of the video. In this sense, the qualities of the script of the physical exhibition merged with the requirements of the script for the filmed exhibition. According to the event script, Giulia had to lead the group on a bike conducting the mobile exhibition across the scripted route; this facilitated the exhibition flow in order to stick to the timed schedule. Whereas, I had to drive Andrea along an itinerary that was not always matching that of the official exhibition, but that permitted Andrea to occasionally precede the participants when entering an art space or when crossing a street. He jumped out from the car and position his camera on a tripod to take steady footage of their arrival. At other times, I

had to drive slowly alongside the participants, sometimes partly occupying the wrong road lane to allow Andrea to shoot the group laterally. In other words, obtaining footage from different angles meant that sometimes I had to drive at the limit of legality. Although in the construction of the exhibition script I could not fully imagine this risk, I had tied the same balloons to the car that were bound to the back of the pacemaker. These balloons served to make other drivers aware of the event that was taking place and to warn them of the fact that the car may behave in an unexpected way. The final editing of the video gathered the footage taken by the two different cameras cutting together the users' view of Driant's camera and the external view of Andrea's camera along with the recording of the radio conversation between Marco, Massimo and Paolo.

Social media script

In the communication before the event, we used a selection of pictures from the previous version of The Art Pacemaker. These images were used to create a profile of the event on the platform *that's contemporary*.com and for the template of the newsletter that I designed and sent to our mailing list. They were useful for populating the event I created on Facebook, which I invited all my Facebook friends in Milan to and others I thought could be interested in knowing more about it. I asked everyone in The Art Pacemaker team to do

so as well. In suggesting this, I temporarily appointed all the team as administrators of the Facebook page of *that's contemporary*. I disseminated these images via a series of tweets on Twitter and posts on Google+ in order to incite users to physically participate. Giulia and I agreed with the Italian art magazines *Exibart* and *Artribune* that they would publish previews of the event on their websites and help us to create a buzz a few days before its physical actualization. On top of this, we collaborated with the press office of Rottapharm | Madaus, our benefactor. They disseminated the communication to their contacts and were able to achieve that an article appeared in the weekly additional magazine of the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*. The announcement of the event was published on other minor blogs and magazine on the web. This work shows that the exhibitionary space of The Art Pacemaker begins to unfold before the event occurring in physical space.

For the day of the event, Giulia appointed an art student Noy Jessica Laufer as the official photographer of The Art Pacemaker.

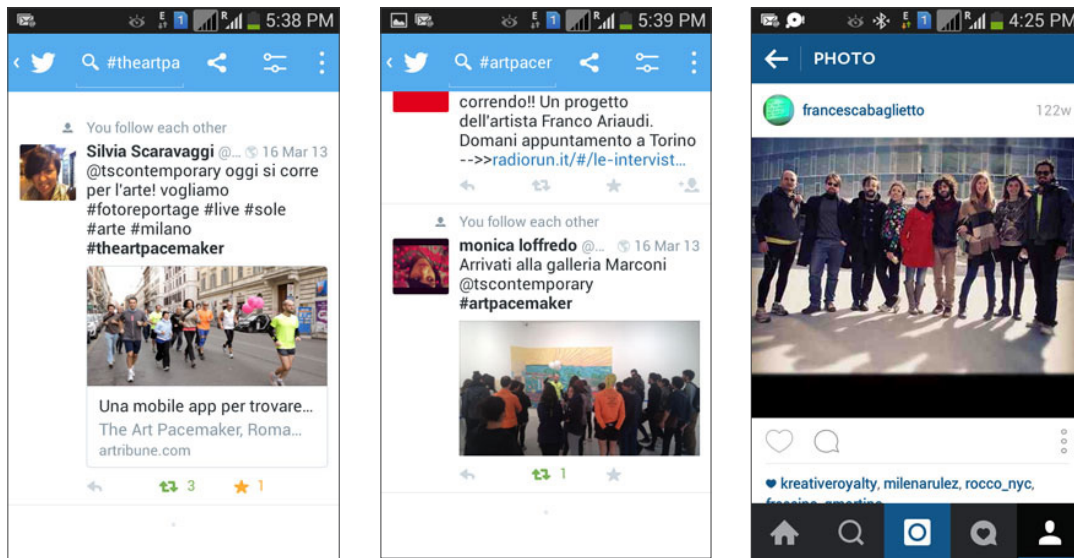
We asked her to ride a bike in order to shadow the group and generate photo documentation of the exhibition while it was taking place. The body of images that she produced were disseminated online just after the event. We agreed with the popular Italian blog *Art *Text *Pics* that they would carry out an interview about the event the very next day. We selected a series of images from Noy's work and sent them to *Art *Text *Pics*'s blogger; they were published along with interview. Some of Noy's images were also made



Screenshot of Artribune's article on The Art Pacemaker



Screenshot of the article on The Art Pacemaker on Dnews, La Repubblica's blog.

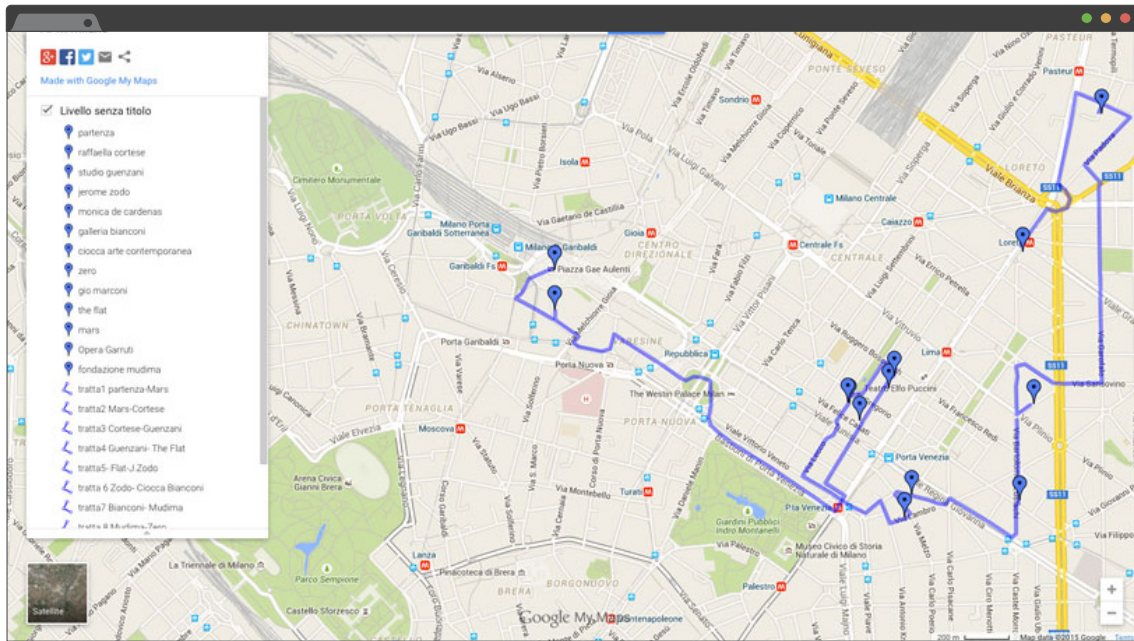


available on the Facebook and Twitter pages of *that's contemporary* as well as on the personal pages of organizers and participants. I also shared a group photo on my Instagram account. As a matter of fact, despite the circulation of the official images that various users have liked, commented and shared on their own profile, users took their own pictures and published them on social networks using hash-tags and locational tags. Therefore, I curated with Giulia the hybrid exhibitionary space of The Art Pacemaker on social media, but the space was enlarged by the use/production of the users activating social media, demonstrating the co-curation of the exhibition. At this point, it is difficult once again to distinguish the work carried out between *me*, *we* and *them*: the exhibitionary space is the result of this curatorial mesh.

Medal script (the post-digital script)

Finally, the exhibition was also played out through a series of medals which we engraved with the digital blue trajectory on Google Maps marked out to *script* the duration and length of the physical exhibitionary space. In this process, the digital trace was *remediated* into the inscribed metallic medals, turning this object into a type of non-digital reminiscence of a digital cookie. Cookies are the traces of information that users leave through their Internet navigation; with The Art Pacemaker, these traces are inscribed in metal, thus precisely challenging the traditional sequence in which 'new' media always absorbs 'old' media. I suggest considering these types of 'physically engraved digital cookies' as a sort of 'post digital remediation'³. Indeed, with post digital remediation I indicate a 'backward' remediation, where the digital media represented by the Google trajectory is refashioned into a more traditional form of exhibitionary tool – the incision of information in metal. The medals are digital artefacts in a tangible form. However, we have photographed them and, therefore, once again

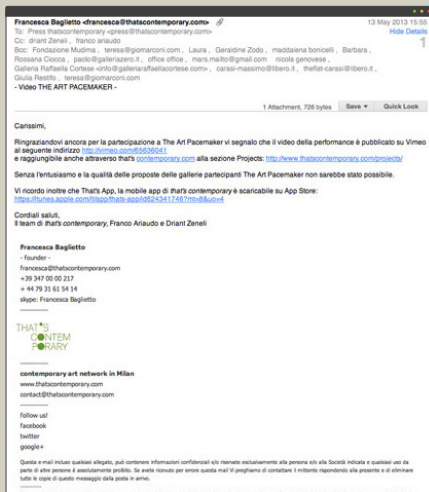
3 The utilization of the term 'post digital' has been commonly used to imply a situation in which digitalization is a normative condition of any social structure. Because society and culture have absorbed digitalization, it is now impossible to draw neat categorizations between what is digital and what is not. Everything has been digitalized, in this way suggesting, in Bruce Sterling's words, 'an eruption of the digital into the physical' (Sterling, 2012), which is what I want to highlight with the expression 'post digital remediation'.

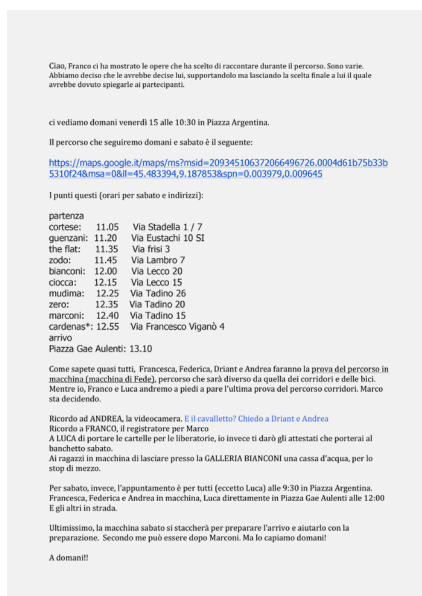
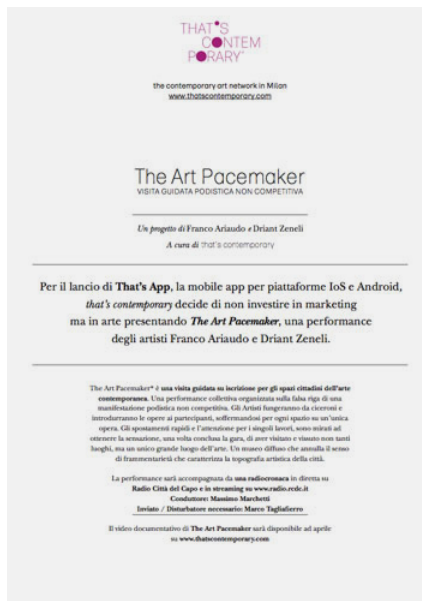


digitally remediated the exhibition in the form of jpg files. These medals were actually given to participants, organizers, founders and sympathizers as. But, their images have been circulating in a network that connects far more users than the circumscribed number of The Art Pacemaker's initial participants.

The Art Pacemaker's route inscribed on the medals. The route was created on Google Map, then transported with Photoshop where the design of the medals was created. Finally the route was engraved on the actual medals.







EXHIBITING THE SCRIPT

In order to orchestrate this hybrid exhibitionary space and its users, each detail had to be planned and synchronized between scripts in an assemblage of instructions tied-up together along a series of files, emails and agreements, entrusting organizers, volunteers, participants, photographers, gallery liaisons, critics and online-magazines with tasks to do in a certain way and at a particular time. Instructions aimed at participants were available in the official communication – the exhibition race bulletin – which prescribed a series of guidelines on how to participate. Directives for space managers and a time schedule with the expected arrival in each venue were enclosed in a collective email sent to art spaces. The production plan with stated actions and roles were emailed and also hand given to each organizer. These documents stemmed as the direct products of the official dispatcher of a program of actions – i.e. the script – that aimed not only to stage The Art Pacemaker as physical exhibition but also to allow its propagation as a hybrid exhibitionary space. Any actor or actant was expected to fulfil roles and actions according to these *scripts* that, as a matter of fact, I have been re-curating, re-mediating and re-performing in this thesis.

Yet, it would be naïf to ascribe remediation as The Art Pacemaker's exclusive attribution. On the contrary, one of the premises of this thesis is that any exhibitionary form reproduces and circulates through other exhibitionary forms via curatorial network production. However, I suggest that The Art Pacemaker, differently from other exhibitionary formats, has been consciously curated to exist along different forms of remediation that have been commissioned, planned and synchronized. This means that from its conception, I have acknowledged, and consequently curated a *script* coordinating the remediations in which this exhibition would exist *before*, *during* and *after* the physical event. Finally, through this process of describing, this chapter has attempted to illuminate the remediation of The Art Pacemaker as a process of absorption of an exhibitionary form by another exhibitionary form: from the physical event, into live radio, into a video documentary, into an incision in a medal, into a stream of content flowing through the Internet and, eventually reshuffled in this thesis. Along this chain, The Art Pacemaker is time and again re-exhibited and the task

of writing-up this thesis turns into a curating process of re-performing these re-mediations. Hence, the thesis becomes a remediation itself, exhibiting the exhibition script but also the hybrid curatorial network production via which The Art Pacemaker circulates.

CONCLUSION

THE THESIS IS THE EXHIBITION: CURATING AS RESEARCH

In this thesis, I have constructed a new model of ‘curating’, which performs differently from the conventional model of exhibition making: a display of ‘objects’ in a definite place, with fixed times and durations. Indeed, I have attempted to expand the possibilities of the exhibition, under the conditions of digital networks and hybrid spaces. I have demonstrated how the experience of an exhibition unfolds beyond the here and now of a physical display in what I have named hybrid exhibitionary spaces. In my conceptualization, hybrid exhibitionary spaces embrace both the physical settings of conventional exhibitions and various other interfaces, through which the exhibition expands in a continuous process of negotiations between the project as conceived by its initial authors and the ways users interact with it. In these terms, the exhibition is experienced collectively offline and online along a network that is continuously re-curated as a consequence of being used – a process that I have termed *network curation*. The construction of such configurations demonstrates that ‘hybrid exhibitionary space’ and ‘network curation’ are one and the same thing: the exhibition itself, which dwells in a permanent process of becoming and growing.

Focusing on these hybrid exhibitionary spaces, rather than on conventional

exhibitions, allowed me to rethink the exhibition as an *activity* produced not just *for* users but also *with* and *by* users. This led my research to also speculate on how curating might be reconceived. Curating an activity – and not a display – means, in fact, that actions are curated rather than a place or a set of objects. This new perspective enabled me to make a distinction between the curation of the exhibitionary system, as addressed by Joasia Krysa (2013), and the curation of content – what is exhibited – within this system. While the curation of the system is consigned to the author curator(s) intended as ‘initiators’ and ‘caretakers’ of the activities forming the exhibitionary spaces, the curatorial work related to content within the system is shared between the author curators and the users.

After clarifying this point, I have introduced the concepts of ‘inscribing’ and ‘prescribing’ the exhibition both *within* interfaces and *across* interfaces, and of ‘describing’ the exhibition understood as a reflective operation. Firstly, in this trilogy, a curator *inscribes* programs of actions – which I have referred to as ‘scripts’ – into the structures of exhibitionary interfaces and into the ways these interfaces communicate with other interfaces. Secondly, a curator *prescribes* these actions to the potential users of these interfaces; in doing so they imagine an ideal user – a ‘scripted user’ – who inhabits and operates interfaces accordingly to the curators’ predictions. Finally, I illustrate the third operation as the curator, who *describes* interfaces through scrutinizing their process of creation along with their actual use. Obviously, the other two operations of inscribing and prescribing intermingle in the description,

Using Akrich and Latour (1992), I have shown how in prescribing actions, curators try to predict users’ behaviors and this prediction informs the structure of the interface. Yet, the type of actions that are prescribed to users might differ from the actual use of the interface. The use of the interfaces, of the exhibition, varies depending on the agency, disposition and (counter) expertise of users, who re-write their own, individual program of actions. In this way, they contribute to manifold productions and descriptions of the exhibition. For this reason, I have demonstrated that there are multiple actions that are generated from the same script and that it is within this tension, between curators’ prescriptions and actual users’ interactions, that hybrid exhibitionary spaces are actualized.

The three chapters that form the main text of this thesis served to demonstrate the above argument. These chapters are organized around three projects that I have developed under the umbrella of *that’s contemporary*.



Italian art curator Antonio Grulli and I talking in *that's contemporary's* stand at miart 2014.

The first chapter described the development of the long-term curatorial project, *that's contemporary* and the web platform *thatscontemporary.com* according to a matrix that has functioned as a script for the platform and has produced the non-profit organization. Through analyzing the script, I have discussed the platform's agency mediating the hybrid experience of users engaging with art in Milan. The description of the platform acted to trace an exhibitionary network formed of interrelated nodes (i.e. event nodes and place nodes) that functions according to an exhibitionary system that values 'activity' over reputation and financial means.

In order to unfold the interface in use, I co-created 'Ann', who was assembled by the aggregate data collected by tools such as Google Analytics and Facebook. Ann has been the result of the amalgamation between the scripted users (the users acting according to the curator's program of actions) and the flows and behaviors of actual users. The account that emerged was also the outcome of my 'translations' in the role of the curator and 'translator' of the text held in this thesis, which performs just one of the many possible trajectories that users might take. This account has also unveiled how the script, in the stages that follow the original release of the platform, restricts the platform's mechanisms within a specific framework, which we – the 'author curators' of the platform, whose agency has been modified along the process – attempts to change and modify, by constructing additional sections to the platform.

After showing both the operation of curating and the act of using *thatscontemporary.com*, this chapter has retraced *that's contemporary* (organization) beyond the web platform *thatscontemporary.com*. From this perspective,

that'scontemporary.com has been considered as just one, amongst a multiplicity of other interconnected exhibitionary interfaces, that create the hybrid exhibitionary space through which *that's contemporary* circulates.

Finally, the first chapter ended with an analysis that trails the curatorial process of selection of commercial galleries, non-profit art spaces and other art institutions and places cohering into the hybrid exhibitionary space of that'scontemporary.com. In this section, I uncovered the contradictions that I had to tackle in the development of an 'egalitarian' exhibitionary model for the web platform while making a curatorial selection, which by 'including' and 'excluding' is almost by definition creating a system of inequalities. Along this line of investigation, I disclosed how the interplay of various forms of legitimacy that rule the art field has merged with mechanisms of validation within digital networks, demonstrating how *that's contemporary* sits in relation to these new relationships of power.



The second chapter explored the new possibilities offered by mobile technology in opening up a renewed understanding of the exhibition as a space that is produced while being 'transported' by users interacting with their mobile devices. In this description, the exhibition emerges in a condition of digital geo-localization.

that's contemporary's team meeting in Milan in early 2012.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first part focused on the work carried out in the development of the mobile version of the platform, the application *That's App* for both operating systems iOS and Android. Through this description, I discussed two main topics that are interrelated that are (1) the

‘mobile exhibition’ and (2) the ‘exhibition user’. Exploring the affordances that portable technologies brought to users, I examined the figure of the exhibition user, along with the creation of the new category of actors within the platform that I named ‘user nodes’. Drawing upon the new structures that this addition has transmitted to the logic of interfaces, I applied the concept of ‘use-value’ to the exhibition. Borrowing Stephen Wright’s understanding of ‘use’ (2007; 2013), I suggested that the term ‘use-value’ corresponds to the value that each user attributes to the exhibition as it is produced. In this way, I advocated that the exhibition is a social space constructed with and by users. Specifically, I have shown how the exhibition is formed via many individual uses, but also through a communal use – the UIT ‘use it together’ exhibition. Yet, at the same time, by showing a series of unrealized designs, I revealed how the exhibition can be customized, depending upon the information available about individual users.

In the second part of this chapter, the space of the exhibition was described as produced by users, operating in a ‘networked space’ (Kennedy, 2012). The notion of networked space has been useful in conceptualizing the exhibition as a space in production, formed by users interacting between interfaces and physical settings – as Kennedy explained, in a situation of intersection of interactions that cross multiple *converged contexts* (ibid). Furthermore, through the concept of networked space I highlighted the idea that accounting or describing spatial interactions means to generate narratives, which, in turn, become themselves spaces of *converged narratives* (ibid). In these terms, I delineated a hybrid experience of the exhibitionary space of Milan that stemmed from two hypothetical users: Ann, who I had already activated in the first chapter, and Giacomo. Using That’s App along with other technological interfaces, in this account I traced a series of actions that led the users to meet in a gallery, in an actual physical space. In line with ANT’s methods, the aim of this section has been to unveil the exhibition along a progression of hybrid delegations, through which the exhibitionary script has been performed, forming a network of actors that are human, non-human, digital and physical. The account has continued by describing the experience of one of the two users, Giacomo, experiencing the exhibition in the gallery and expanding it through digital networks. In this final section, I have evidenced network curation, in which the physical exhibition grows through user-generated content in hybrid space. I have unfolded such scenario by opening up the concept of script in three stages: the (conceived) script, the ascribed script and the performed script. As explained in the thesis, such model was also inspired by the Lefebvrian conception of space (Lefebvre, 1991).



In the third chapter I described The Art Pacemaker, a type of distributed exhibition that took place in physical space but that also unfolded across digital and non-digital interfaces. The Art Pacemaker consisted of an exhibition unfolding as a result of a group of users moving from one art location to the next, according to an exhibitionary script. I explained how the ‘pacemaker’ functioned as the exhibitionary guide for the exhibition, highlighting artworks along the paths and providing contextual information. Users could, in this way, use the pacemaker as an interface mediating between them and the artworks. I suggested reading The Art Pacemaker as a type of ‘analogical app’ and showed how the exhibition, with the exhibition users traversing the city, seemed to replicate a digital network in which information flows from one node to another.

Driant Zeneli, Franco Ariaudo and myself picking up one of the artworks for The Art Pacemaker at Bianconi gallery.

Perhaps more importantly, the aim has been to highlight that, even though The Art Pacemaker was curated or *inscribed* to stage a physical exhibition, its exhibitionary space was also enacted via its reiteration in other media. I have referred to this reiteration, borrowing from Jay David Bolter and Robert Grusin’s concept (1999), as ‘remediation’ and described it through the enactment of four main exhibitionary scripts. These scripts, in fact, organized the exhibition as live streaming audio on the radio, as an incision on a series of bronze medals, as a video collating together both footage and audio recordings and also as streams of tweets, comments, blogs and Facebook posts, shares, likes and hash-tags, gathering and re-performing all of the documentary material that the project generated along its unfolding.

The third chapter ended by introducing the idea that in writing-up I have performed the curatorial concept of ‘describing’.

Now, drawing upon what I proposed in the introduction, I will reflect on what it has meant ‘to describe’ in this thesis. In doing so, I need to take a step back and explore how my practice-based research has, in fact, been nurtured by two main modes of investigation, which have also been discussed in Paul O’Neill and Mick Wilson’s edited text, *Curating Research* (2015). These modes are, ‘researching within the exhibition-making’ and ‘exhibition as a research action itself’ (O’Neill and Wilson, 2015, p. 12). The first activity is quite evident in my work, which coincides with the operation of documenting the traces and evidence that have witnessed the production of the exhibition while occurring. The second activity, which I am going to focus on here, is related to the fact that I consider the thesis an exhibitionary space in itself and that, through gathering together the actors of such an exhibitionary space, I have not only prepared the ground for my research but also gave a direction to it. Put differently, *that’s contemporary* has been researched through documenting, connecting and contextualizing the actors or exhibited objects, i.e. analytics, infographics, photos, screenshots, emails, whatsapp and Facebook texts, tweets and video captures. Weaving together all of this documentary material to form the exhibition-as-thesis – my research – meant creating a narrative account describing my practice. In this sense, the exhibition has functioned as a research action itself, or, reverting the order of the statement, the research has been enacted through the making of the exhibition.

This idea of exhibition as research is well stated by Simon Sheikh in ‘Towards the Exhibition as Research’ (2015) in *Curating Research*. Sheikh writes:

The curatorial project – including its most dominant form, the exhibition – should thus not only be thought of as a form of mediation of research but also as a site for carrying out this research, as a place for enacted research. Research here is not only that which comes before realisation but also that which is realised throughout actualisation. That which would otherwise be thought of as formal means of transmitting knowledge – such as design structures, display models and perceptual experiments – is here an integral part of the curatorial mode of address, its content production, its proposition. (SHEIKH, 2015, P. 40)

In this double activity of, firstly, curating exhibitionary spaces (inscribing and prescribing *that’s contemporary’s* exhibitionary interfaces) and, secondly, curating within this exhibition/thesis, the documentary material that evidenced these exhibitionary spaces, acquires a double ontology. The first ontology is the object of research – the exhibitionary spaces of *that’s contemporary* – which are found in the description that has been woven together in this exhibition/thesis. The second ontology is the description itself. Yet, this description has been treated not as a medium for impartially presenting the research actors, but as the exhibitionary space for establishing the research that it unveils.

This idea of the exhibition as research and vice versa is also found in the relationship between the concepts of ‘exhibition’, ‘description’ and ‘translation’. As already discussed, in Actor Network Theory, description is not a neutral tool, rather it addresses that which is being researched via collating evidence, assembling information and tracing correspondences. Viewed in this way, description is synonymous with the ANT concept of *translation*, (which I have already discussed in the introduction). Thesis, understood as the result of translation, can be described well with Michel Callon and Bruno Latour’s ‘Unscrewing the Big Leviathan: How Actors Macro-Structure Reality and How Sociologists Help Them To Do So’ (1981). They write:

By translation we understand all the negotiations, intrigues, calculations, acts of persuasion and violence, thanks to which an actor or force takes, or causes to be conferred on itself, authority to speak or act on behalf of another actor or force: ‘Our interests are the same’, ‘do what I want’, ‘you cannot succeed without doing through me’. Whenever an actor speaks of ‘us’, s/he is translating other actors into a single will, of which s/he becomes spirit and spokesman. S/he begins to act for several, no longer for one alone. S/he becomes stronger. S/he grows.

(CALLON AND LATOUR, 1981, P. 279)

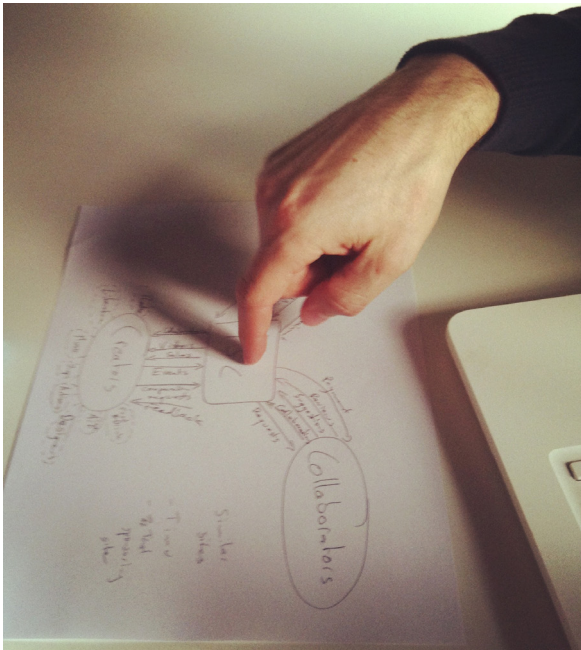
The translations forming this thesis have been composed according to a hypothesis that I wanted to address. This means that all of the actions that have translated *that’s contemporary* into the exhibition /thesis served to advance a research proposition, which was to demonstrate the exhibition exists along the network of its curation. Therefore, in weaving the translations between these actors I have constructed the object of research because translation, and this is very crucial, modifies what it transports.

Because the object of research has been constructed through its display – in the unfolding of the exhibition/thesis – it is feasible to say that *exhibiting* actors was a way to evidence a research proposal. This relates to the etymology of the word ‘exhibition,’ which derives from the Latin ‘*exhibitionem*’ (nominative *exhibitio*). The term ‘*exhibitio*’ is a noun of action from the verb ‘*exhibere*’, meaning ‘to show, display, present,’ and literally ‘hold out, hold forth,’ therefore, implying the general action of presenting. Later on, the verb ‘*exhibit*’ has more specifically signified ‘submit for consideration’ and ‘presenting a document as evidence in court’ (Oxford Dictionary, 2015). These meanings suggest that the current connotation of exhibition derives from a broader understanding of the term as a type of display of evidence, a proposal to be submitted for consideration. In this sense, the overlap between the exhibition and the thesis and, consequently, between the practice of the curator and the researcher are evident. Such commonalities have been emphasised in this practice-based research; which has been made *usable* by this thesis.

CONCLUSION

With the end of this thesis I also conclude my adventure at *that's contemporary*. I take the opportunity of this conclusion to notify, also in the context of my academic research, my resignation from my position at *that's contemporary* along with the handing over of my curatorial duties and responsibilities. With this announcement I, in fact, draw a line of separation between what I have contributed, in tight collaboration with my colleagues, and what will be created afterwards under the umbrella of *that's contemporary* which this thesis in its present state cannot take authorship or responsibilities for. This also means that from now on I will not have control of the changes that might be applied to the web platforms and mobile apps.

Given the volatility of these online exhibitionary spaces – which is, as a matter of fact, a commonly shared condition of any project inhabiting the Internet – treating this thesis as exhibition itself turned into a necessity, a way to witness the practice component of my research.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

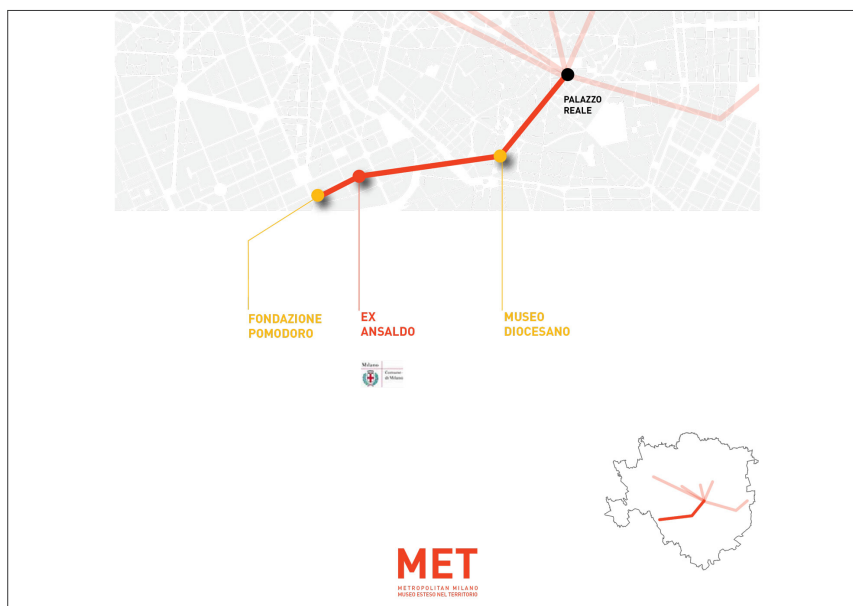
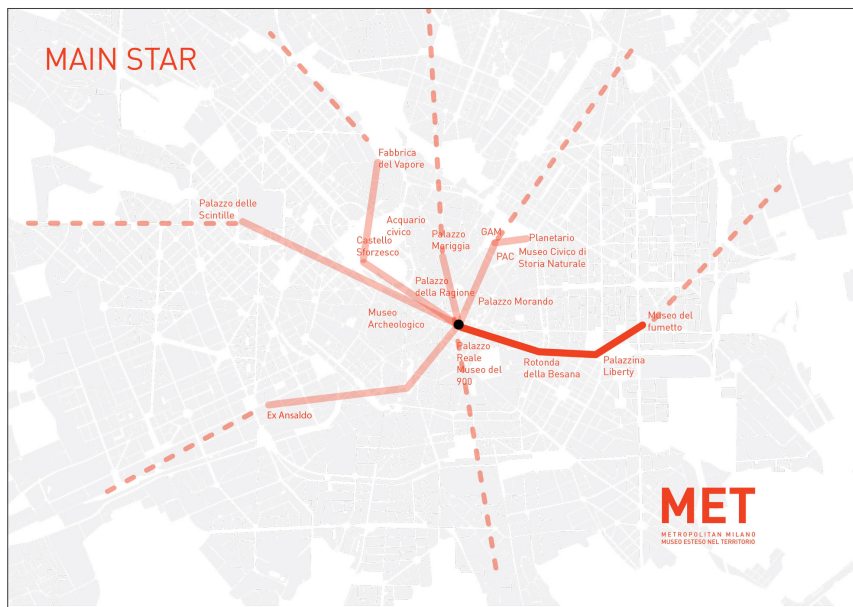
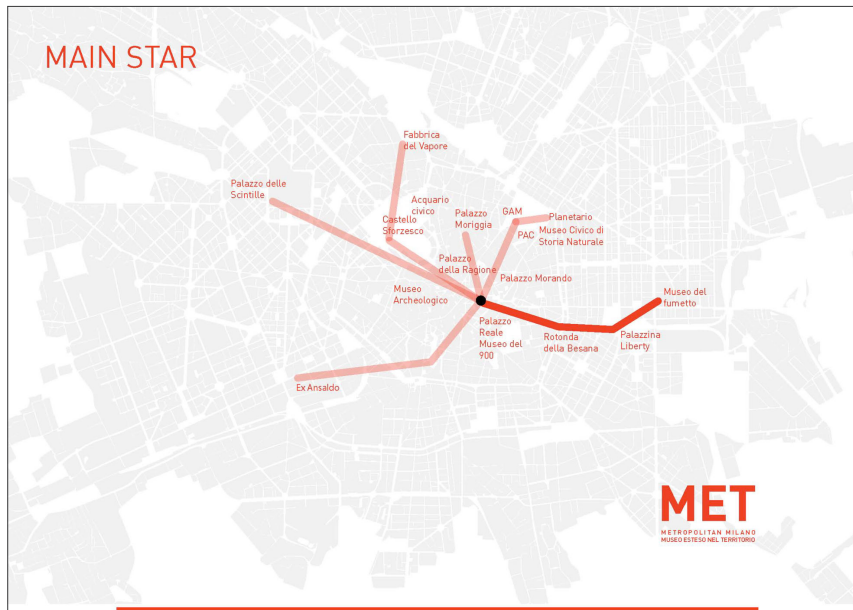
*MET – Metropolitan Milan or Territorially
Extended Museum*

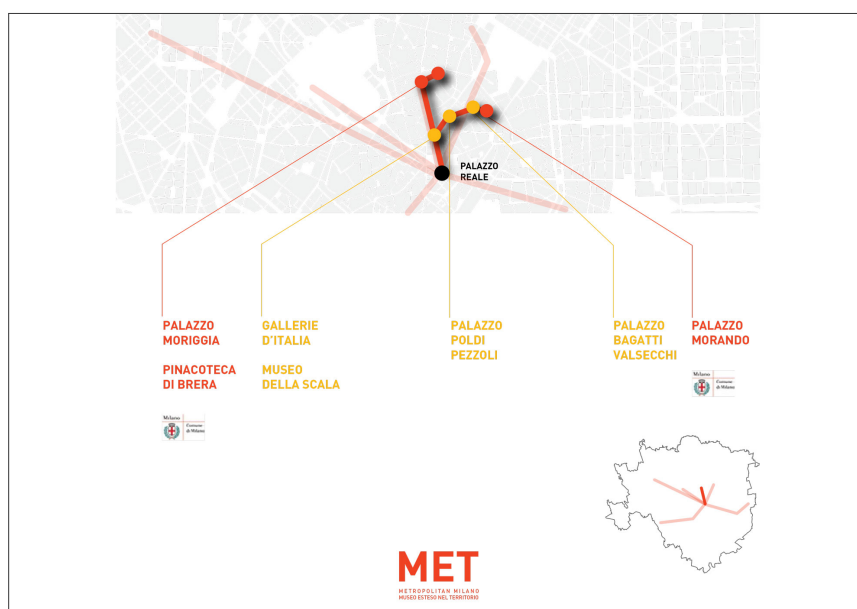
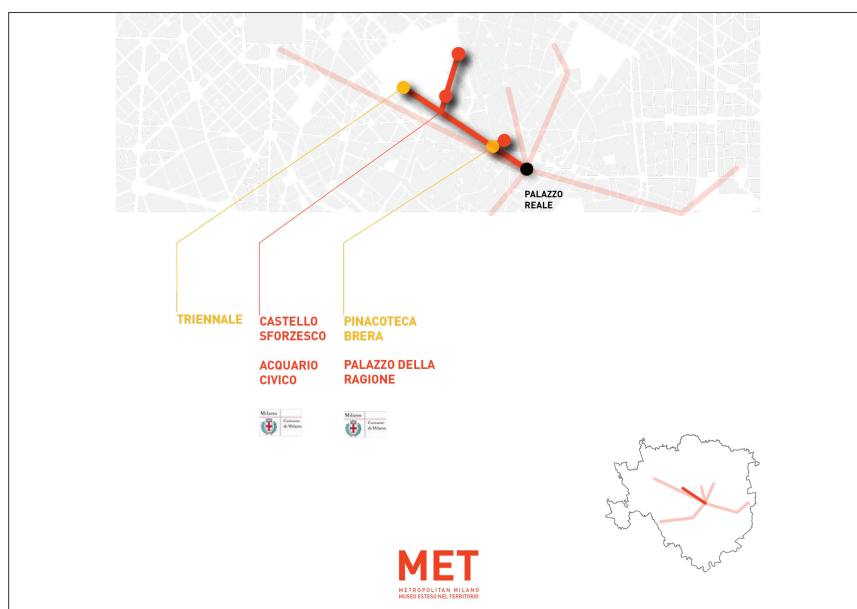
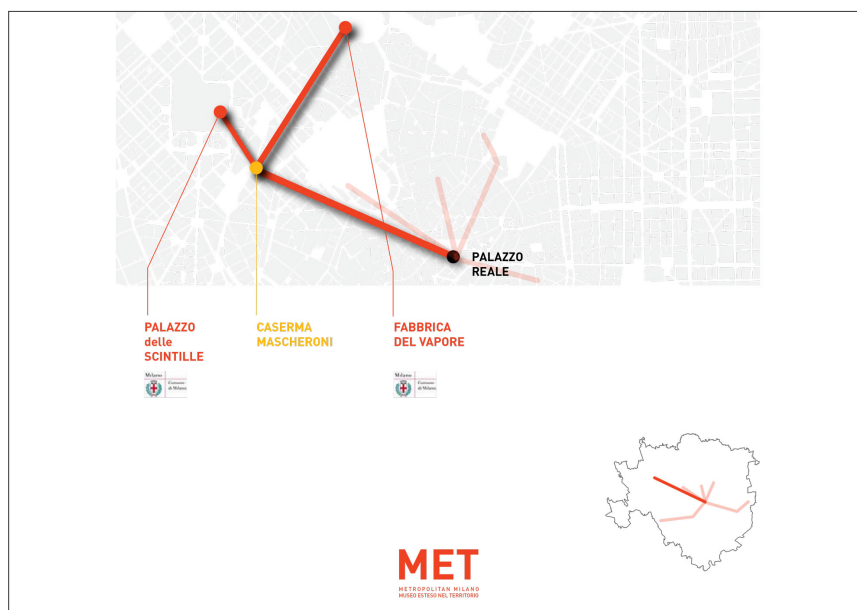
*Powerpoint presented by Stefano Boeri at
the Symposium 'Milano: il futuro
contemporaneo', Bocconi University,
Milan, 14 March 2012.*

10 IDEE

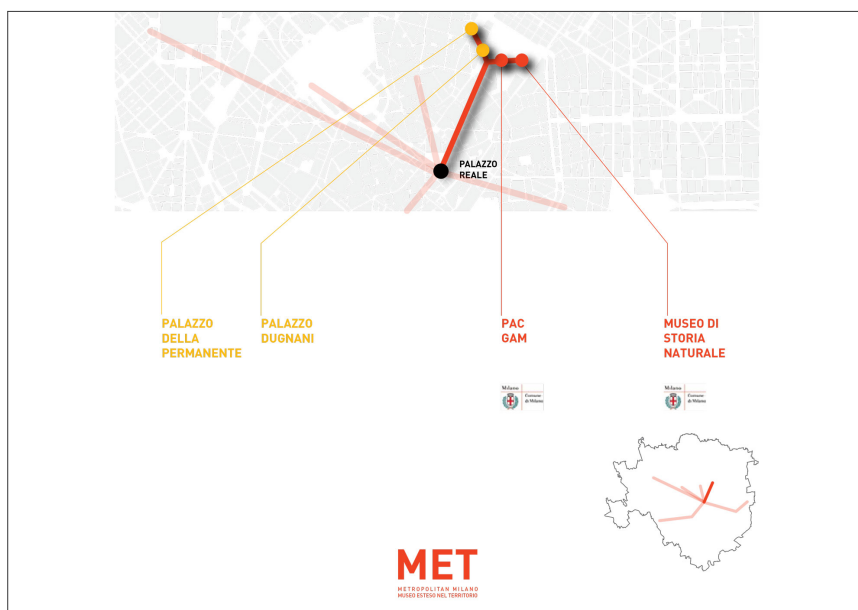
PER LA CULTURA A MILANO

1. **OLTRE LA LOGICA DELL'AFFITTACAMERE** | ridare identità alle eccellenze
2. **OLTRE LA FRAMMENTAZIONE** | isole e percorsi della cultura
3. **OLTRE IL MODELLO DI CULTURA DI PERIFERIA** | le reti di quartiere: i distretti della cultura
4. **OLTRE IL MODELLO DELLE CASE PER LA CULTURA** | gli Hub della cultura
5. **OLTRE IL MODELLO DELLA PARTECIPAZIONE** | auto-organizzarsi per produrre cultura
6. **OLTRE IL MODELLO DELL'INTEGRAZIONE** | il mondo che già abita Milano - la Consulta della Città Mondo
7. **OLTRE IL MODELLO DEL CAMPUS** | le Università e i luoghi della cultura
8. **OLTRE IL MODELLO DEL GRANDE EVENTO ISOLATO** | il FUORI cultura
9. **OLTRE IL MODELLO DEL DECENTRAMENTO** | iniziative di cultura virale
10. **OLTRE IL MODELLO DELLA COMPETIZIONE TRA CITTÀ** | la cultura ad alta velocità





APPENDIX I



PALAZZO REALE
 MUSEO DEL '900
 PAC
 PALAZZO DELLA RAGIONE
 ROTONDA DELLA BESANA
 CASTELLO SFORZESCO
 CENTRO DELLE CULTURE DEL MONDO (EX ANSALDO)
 GAM
 PALAZZO MORANDO
 PALAZZO MORIGGIA
 MUSEO DI STORIA NATURALE
 PLANETARIO
 ACQUARIO CIVICO
 FABBRICA DEL VAPORE
 MUSEO DEL FUMETTO
 PALAZZO DELLE SCINTILLE
 MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO
 PALAZZINA LIBERTY

PALAZZO REALE - GRANDI AUTORI E MOSTRE INTERNAZIONALI
MUSEO DEL '900 - LA STORIA DEL '900 ITALIANO
PAC - PERSONALI D'ARTISTA TRA SPERIMENTAZIONE E RICERCA
PALAZZO DELLA RAGIONE - LA STORIA, IL PRESENTE, IL FUTURO DI MILANO
ROTONDA DELLA BESANA - IL MONDO DEI BAMBINI TRA CULTURA E CREATIVITA'
CASTELLO SFORZESCO - MUSEO DELL'ARTE ANTICA E DELLE ARTI APPLICATE
CENTRO DELLE CULTURE DEL MONDO (EX ANSALDO)
GAM - SPLENDORI DELL' 800
PALAZZO MORANDO - LA RICERCA SULL'IMMAGINE
PALAZZO MORIGGIA - RISORGIMENTO
MUSEO DI STORIA NATURALE — POLO SCIENTIFICO
PLANETARIO
ACQUARIO CIVICO
FABBRICA DEL VAPORE - MULTIMEDIALITA', LABORATORI CREATIVI E OPERE SITE SPECIFIC
PALAZZO DELLE SCINTILLE - CENTRO POLIVALENTE DELLA MODA E DEL COSTUME

PROGRAMMA ESPOSITIVO

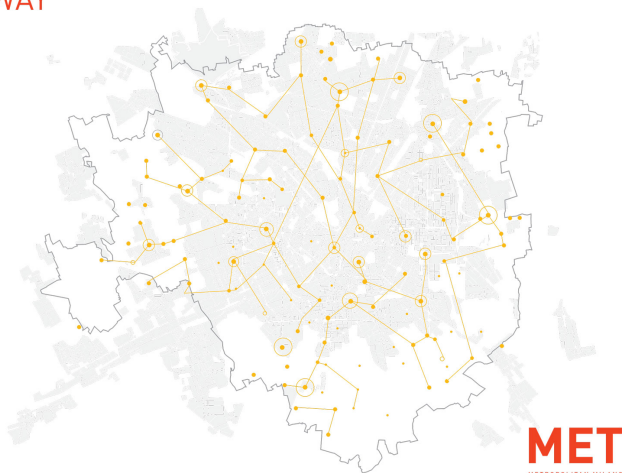
MET PROGRAMMA ESPOSITIVO
METROPOLITAN MILANO
MUSEO ESTERNO NEL TEMPIO

	Gennaio	Febbraio	Marzo	Aprile	Maggio	Giugno	Luglio	Agosto	Settembre	Ottobre	Novembre	Dicembre
PALAZZO REALE			TIZIANO E LA NASCITA DEL PAESAGGIO MODERNO							PABLO PICASSO. CAPOLAVORI DEL MUSEO DI PICASSO		
			FAMIGLIA ALL'ITALIANA		LA COLLEZIONE ACACIA							
				DARIO FO: LAZZI, SBERLEFFI, DIPINTI								CHARLES RAY
					SUSANNE PHILIPPSZ							
					ADDIO ANNI '70. ARTE A MILANO					SIR DENIS MAHON. 100 ANNI DI VITA E STUDIO ATTRAVERSO IL '400		
				ENRICO BAI I funerali dell'anarchico Pinelli			PROJECT ROOM				GIULIO EINAUDI	
MUSEO DEL 900					TECNICA MISTA. COME E' FATTA L'ARTE NEL 900					COLLEZIONARE IL NOVECENTO 1. LA COLLEZIONE GIAN FERRARI		
					BEPPE DEVALLE. COLLAGE DEGLI ANNI SESSANTA							
				IL DISEGNO DELLA SCRITTURA. I LIBRI DI GASTONE NOVELLI		ARTE PROGRAMMATA 1962/2012				LA GALLERIA DEL MILIONE E FAUSTO MELOTTI		
									FABIO VIALE		IL QUARTO STATO	
											ARI MORTIS - DOCCA	
PAC				THE ABRAMOVIC METHOD		ADAM CURTIS				ALBERTO GARUTTI		

MET PROGRAMMA ESPOSITIVO
METROPOLITAN MILANO
MUSEO ESTERNO NEL TEMPIO

	Gennaio	Febbraio	Marzo	Aprile	Maggio	Giugno	Luglio	Agosto	Settembre	Ottobre	Novembre	Dicembre
CASTELLO SFORZESCO			SAFET ZEC		BRAMANTINO					TESSUTI COPTI NELLE COLLEZIONI DEL CASTELLO SFORZESCO		
				TRA I CORPI. ARTE E DESIGN								
ROTONDA BESANA					EQUILIBRIO					DA PINOCCHIO A HARRY POTTER		
EX ANSALDO					HUMAN FAMILY opera teaser					DAK'ART		
										HUMAN FAMILY		
FABBRICA DEL VAPORE			AUTOPRODUZIONE MILANO					FABIO MAURI				
SPAZIO MORANDO			FASHION KNITWEAR						GABRIELE BASILICO	JUERGEN TELLER		
			WALTER ALBINI		FRANCESCO JODICE			JAMES NACHTWEY		ANGIOLO D'ANDREA		
PALAZZO MORIGGIA					LA MODERNA XILOGRAFIA IN ITALIA 1898-1897							
GAM			IAN WILSON							MEDARDO ROSSO		
POLO SCIENTIFICO		VIAGGI DI LUCA CAVALLI SFORZA			IL SENSO DELLA BIODIVERSITA'			FOOD		BRAIN		
MUSEO DEL FUMETTO				DAL MANGA ALL'ANIME	AMAZING SPIDERMAN			JIRI TRNKA		LA FINE DEL MONDO-MARTIN MYSTERE		

MILK WAY



PIAZZA DUOMO 14

Incontri di Cultura

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| 01 | Luglio 2011
Musica indipendente | 08 | Novembre 2011
Moda e nuovi creativi |
| 02 | Settembre 2011
Produzione Cinematografica | 09 | Novembre 2011
Biblioteche |
| 03 | Settembre 2011
Gallerie e Spazi per l'arte | 10 | Dicembre 2011
Moda e nuovi Creativi |
| 04 | Settembre e Ottobre 2011
Nuove Forme di Produzione teatrale | 11 | Dicembre 2011
Scuole Aperte |
| 05 | Ottobre 2011
Festival e Rassegne Musicali | 12 | Gennaio 2011
Teatro |
| 06 | Ottobre 2011
Nuclei di Identità Locale | 13 | Gennaio 2011
Musica |
| 07 | Ottobre 2011
Scuole Aperte | 14 | Febbraio 2011
Arte |

PIAZZA DUOMO 14

Incontri di Cultura



Piano City



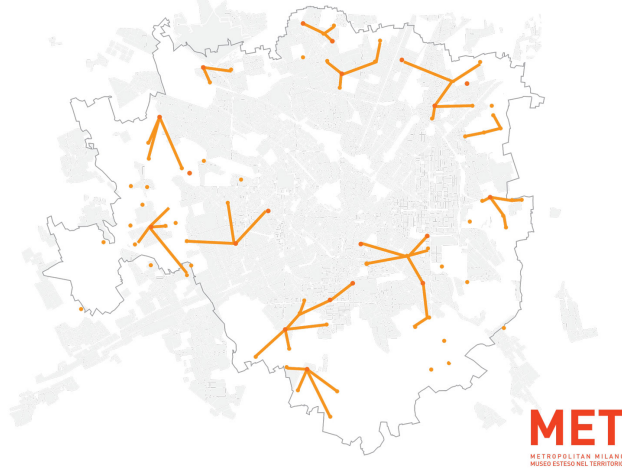
Radio City



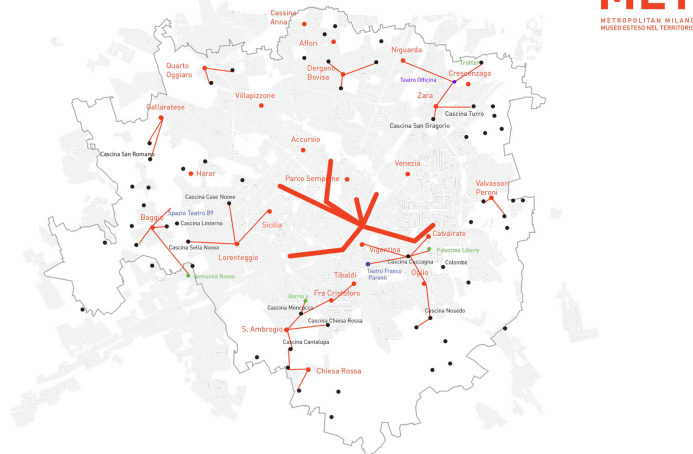
Chorus City



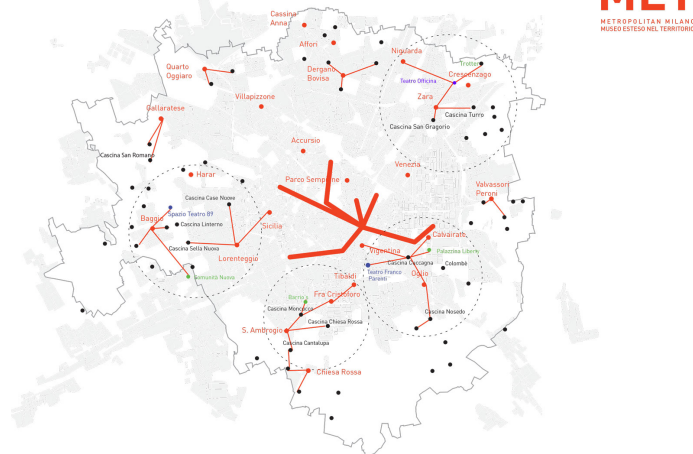
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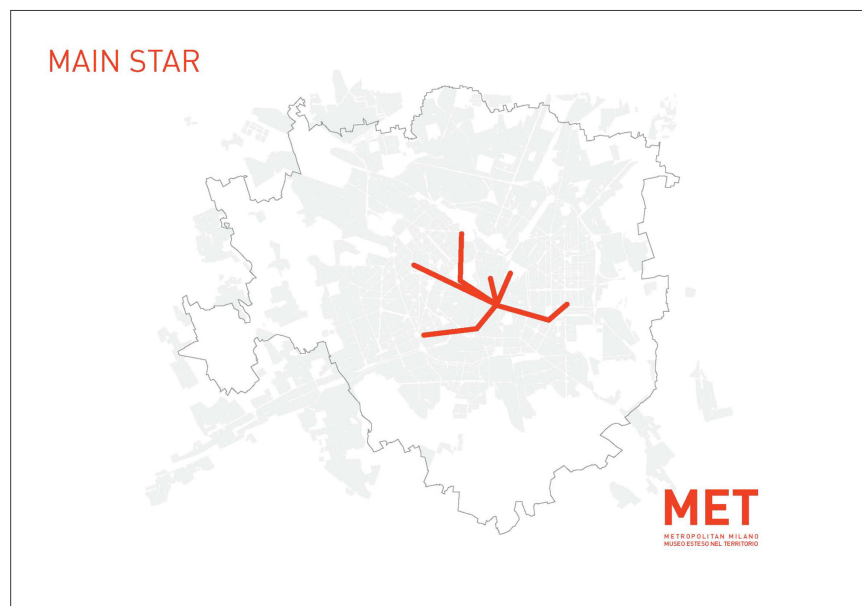
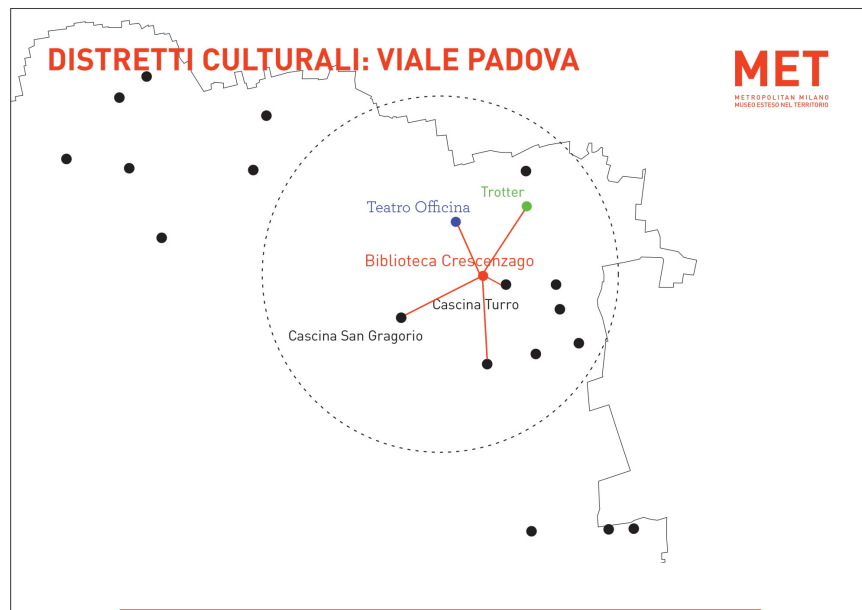


DISTRETTI CULTURALI

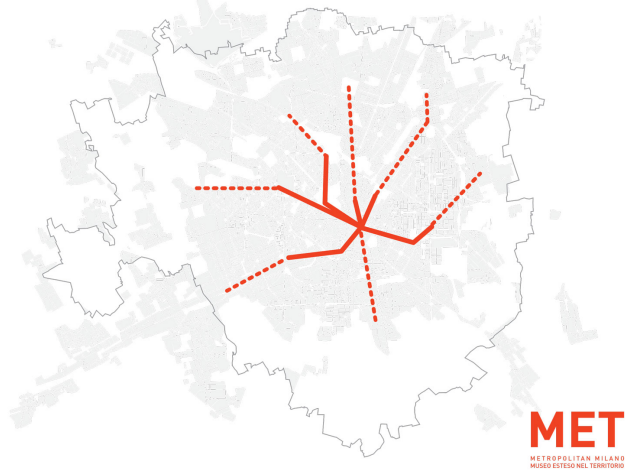


DISTRETTI CULTURALI

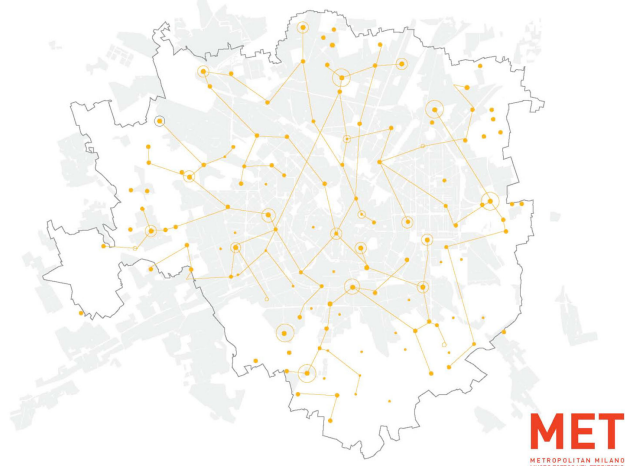




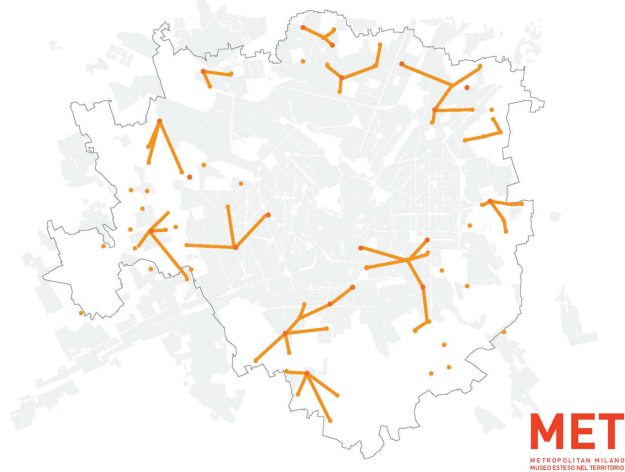
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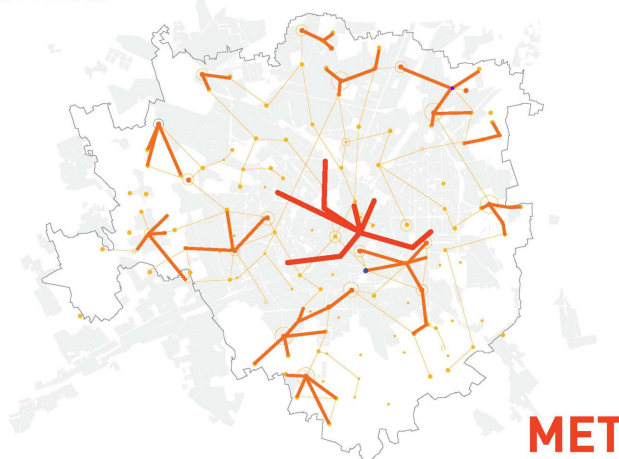
MILK WAY



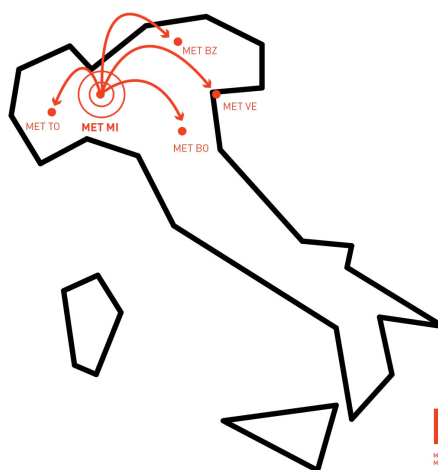
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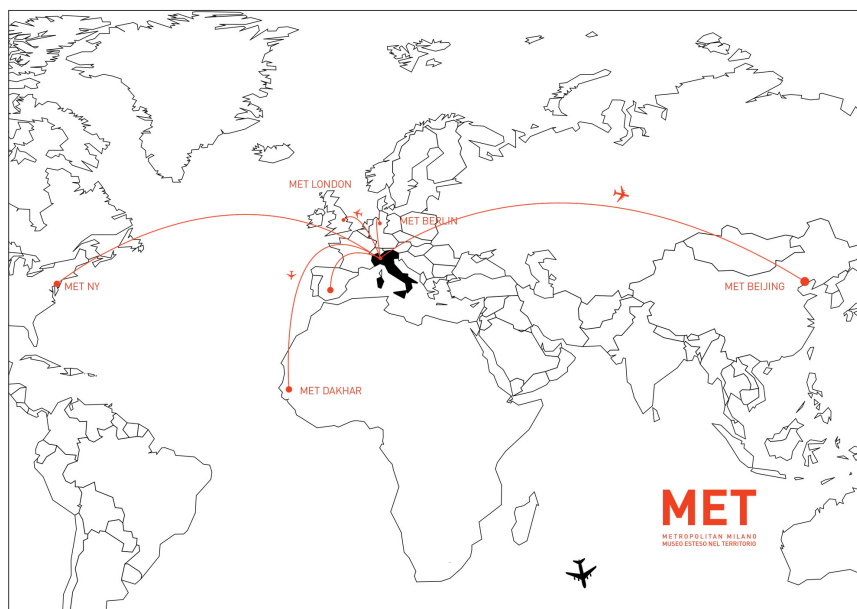
MET&OTHERS



MET
METROPOLITAN: MILANO
MUSEO ESTESO NEL TERRITORIO



MET
METROPOLITAN: MILANO
MUSEO ESTESO NEL TERRITORIO



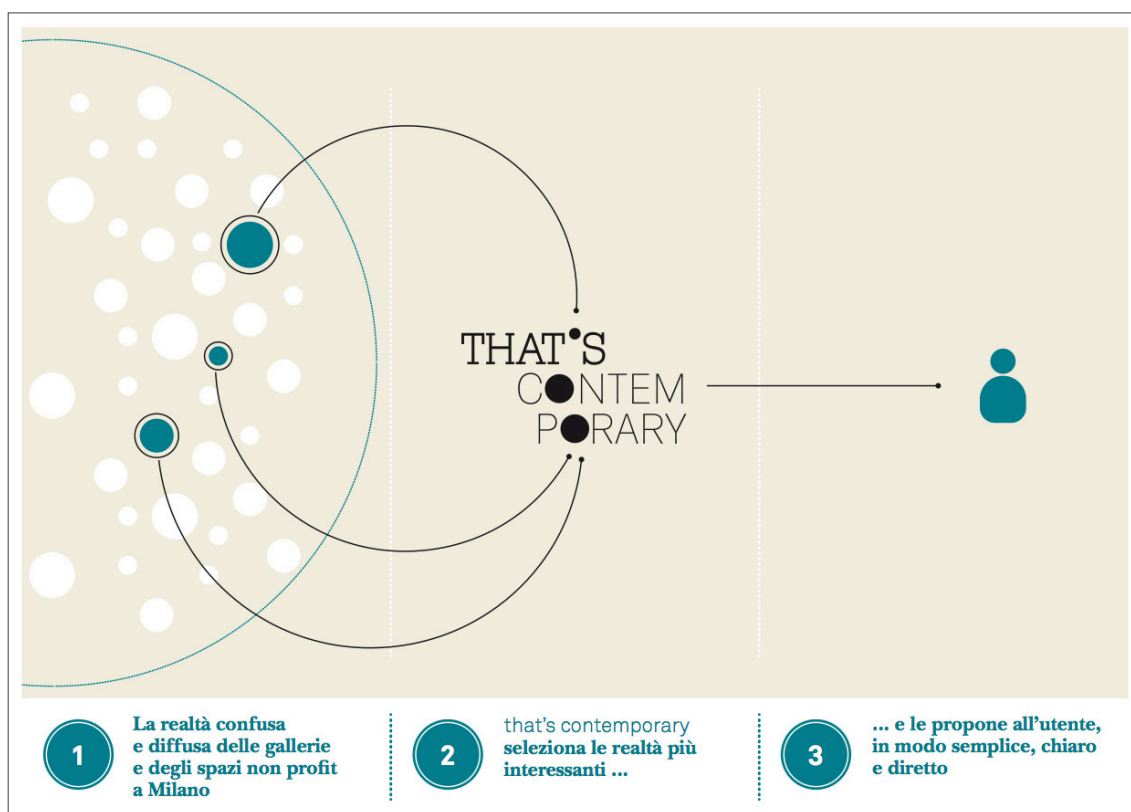
MET
METROPOLITAN: MILANO
MUSEO ESTESO NEL TERRITORIO



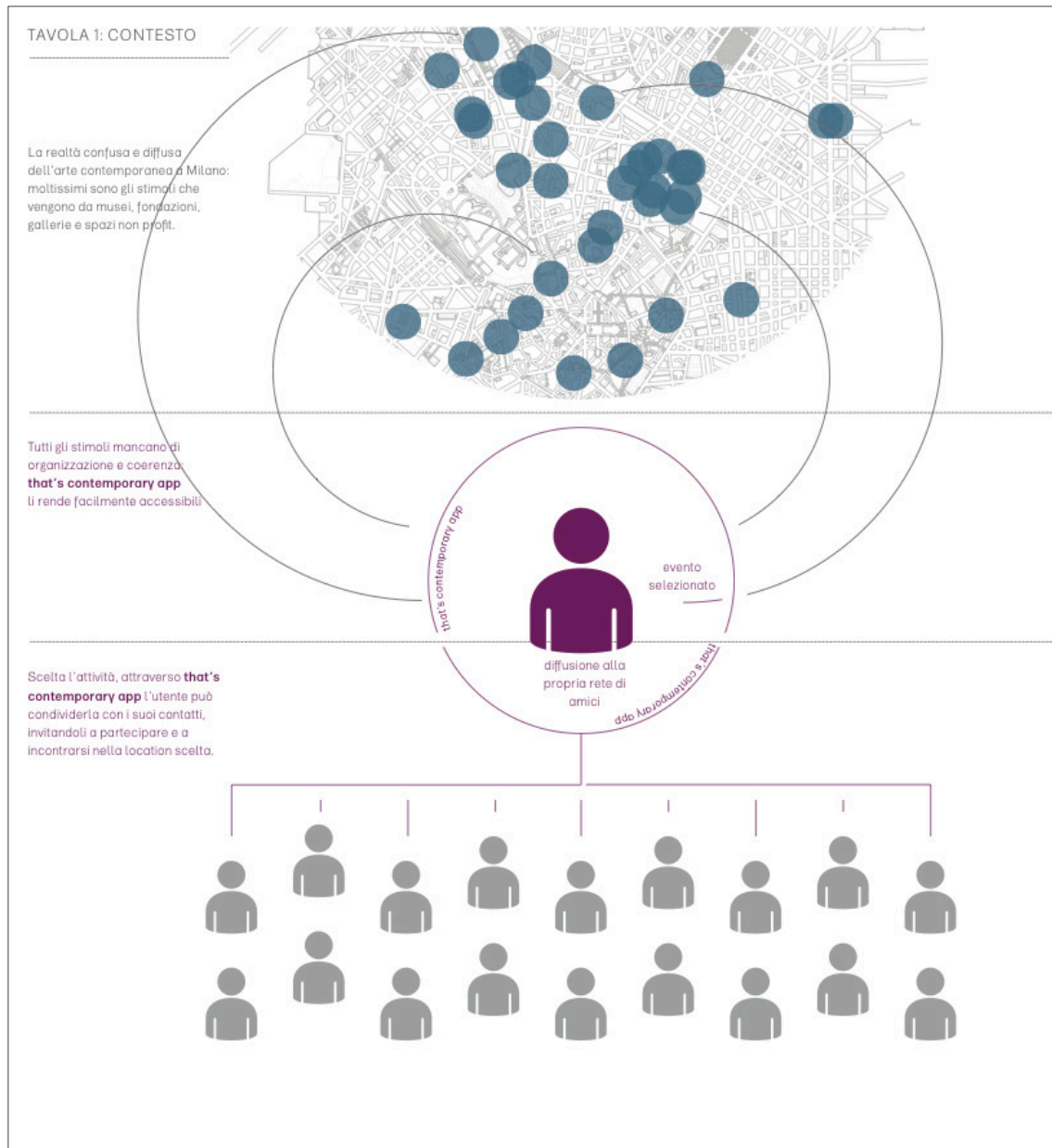
APPENDIX II

Infographics: What is mediated?

- A** INFOGRAPHIC (2011): *that's contemporary* mediates between art in Milan and individual users.



- B** INFOGRAPHIC (2012): *that's contemporary mediates while enabling users to experience art together in Milan – the UIT (use it together) exhibition.*



APPENDIX III

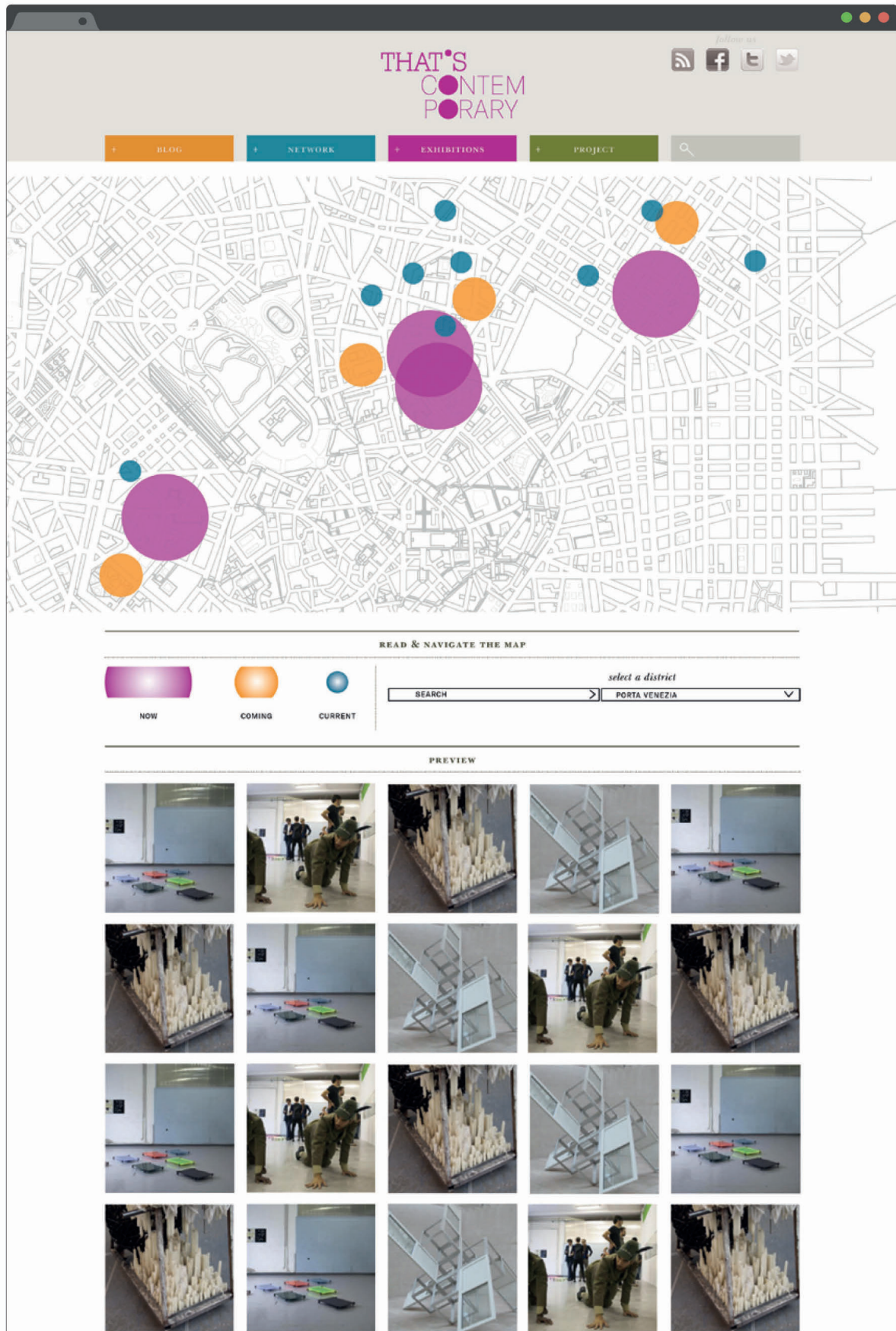
Andrea's logo proposals

THAT'S
CONTEM
PORARY



APPENDIX IV

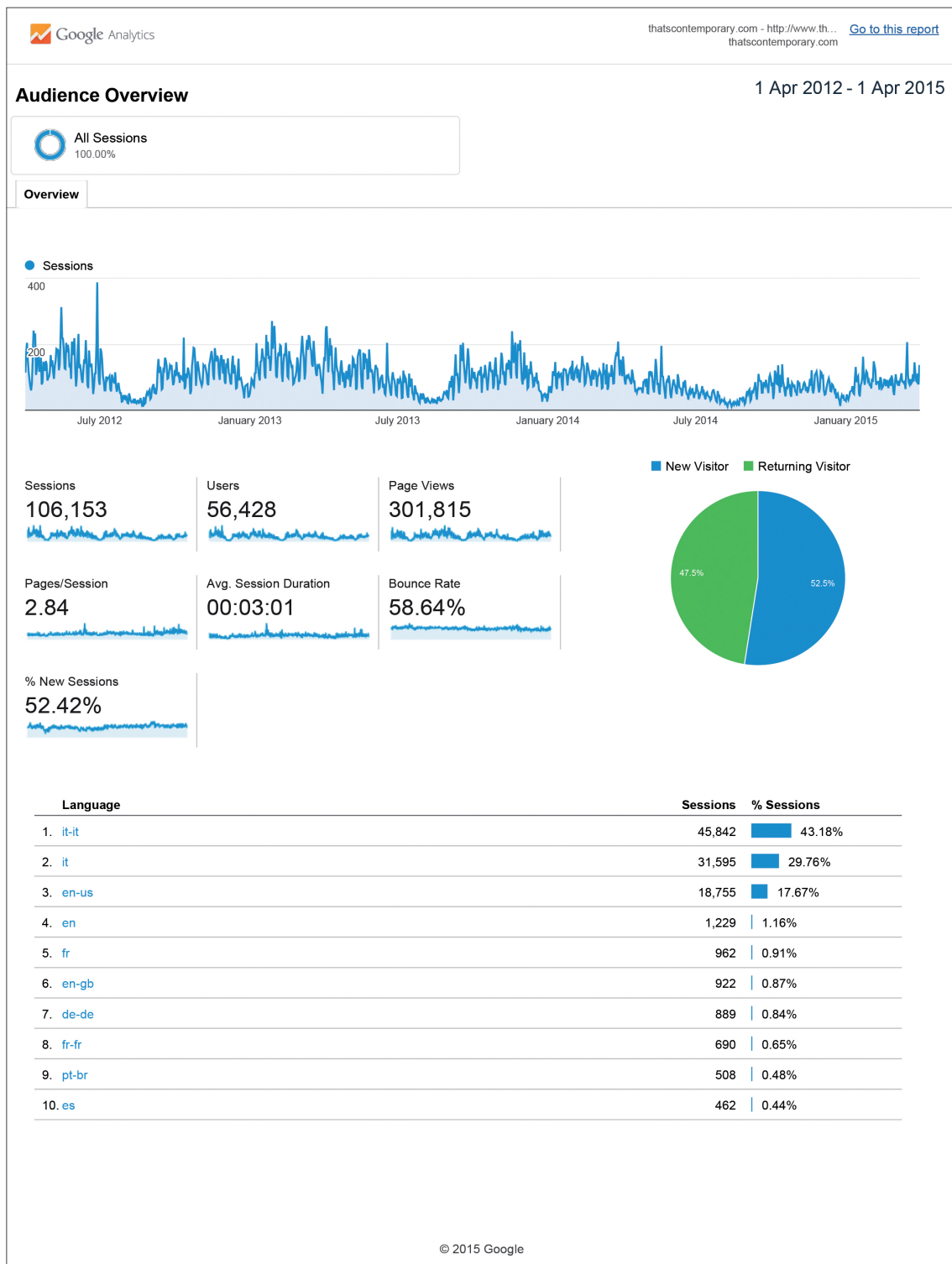
First layout of that'scontemporary.com



APPENDIX V

*Google Analytics**thatscontemporary.com**1st April 2012 – 1st April 2015*

1 AUDIENCE OVERVIEW



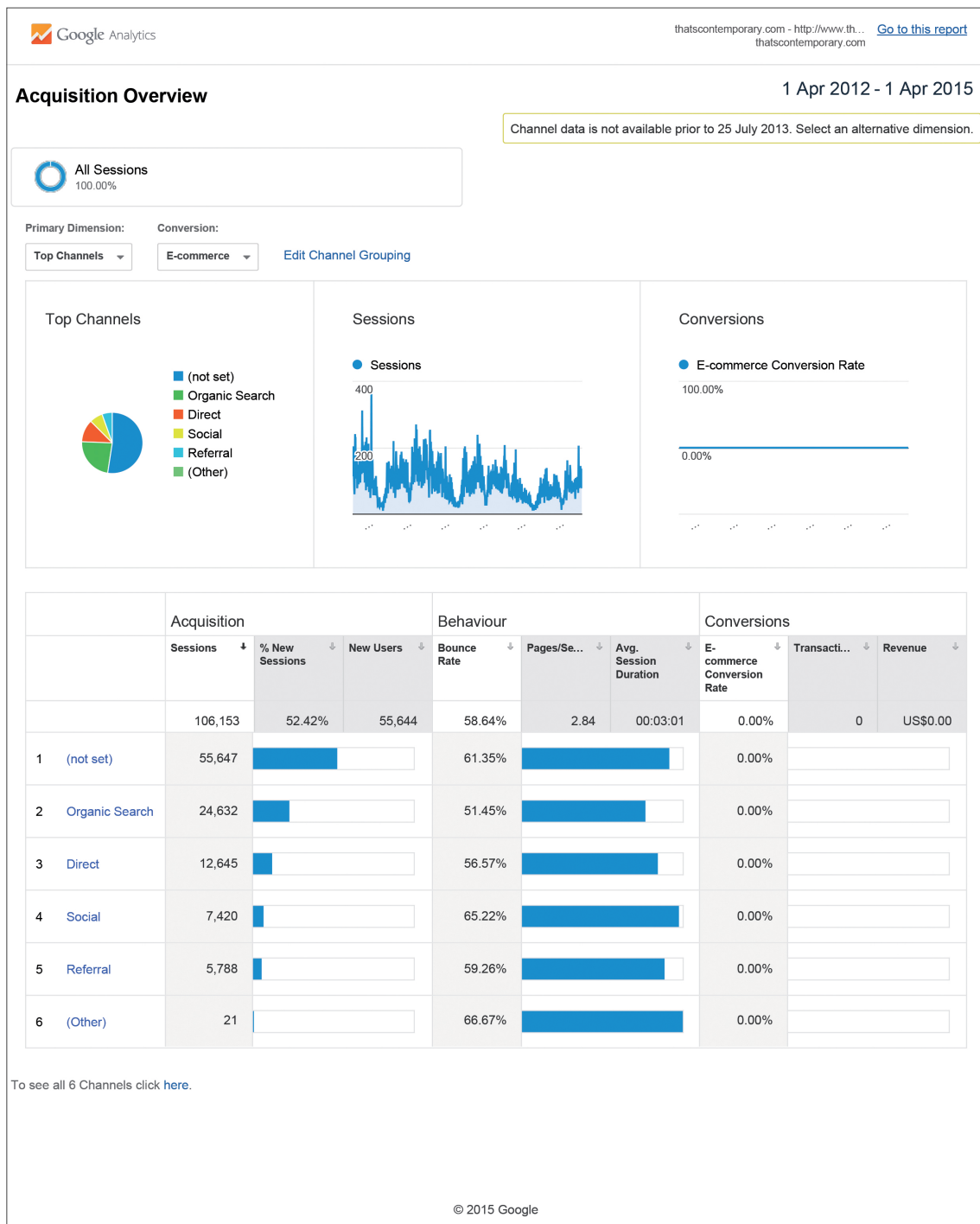
2 USER FLOW



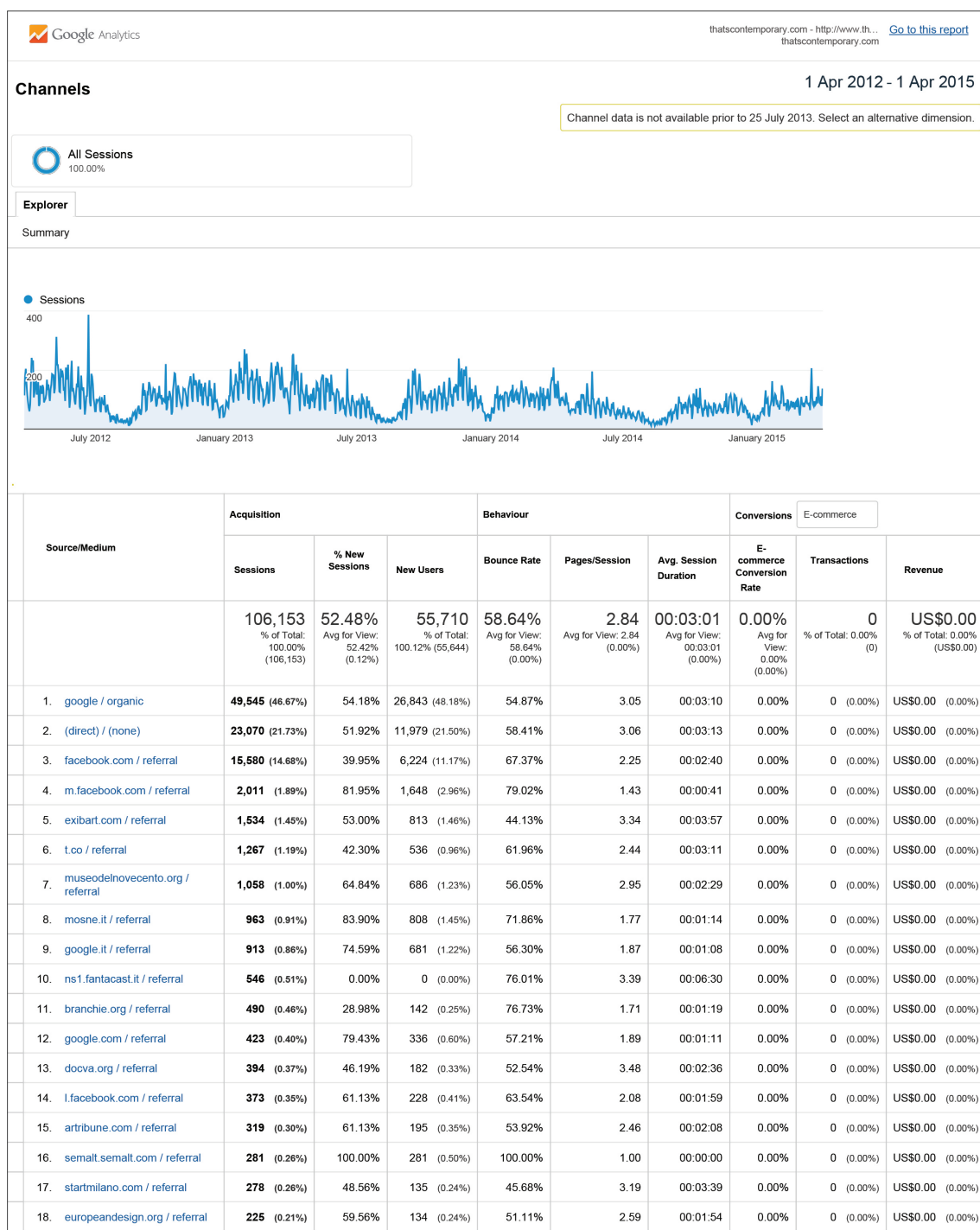
3 BEHAVIOR FLOW



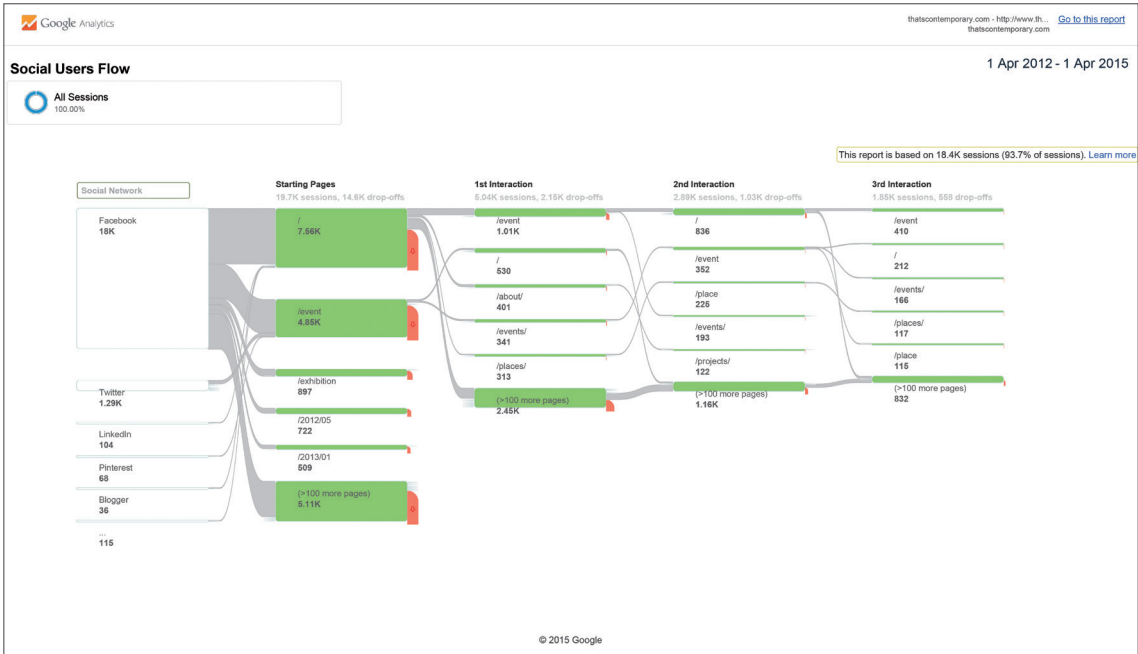
4 ACQUISITION OVERVIEW: *Overview*



4 ACQUISITION OVERVIEW: *Channel (Acquisition)*

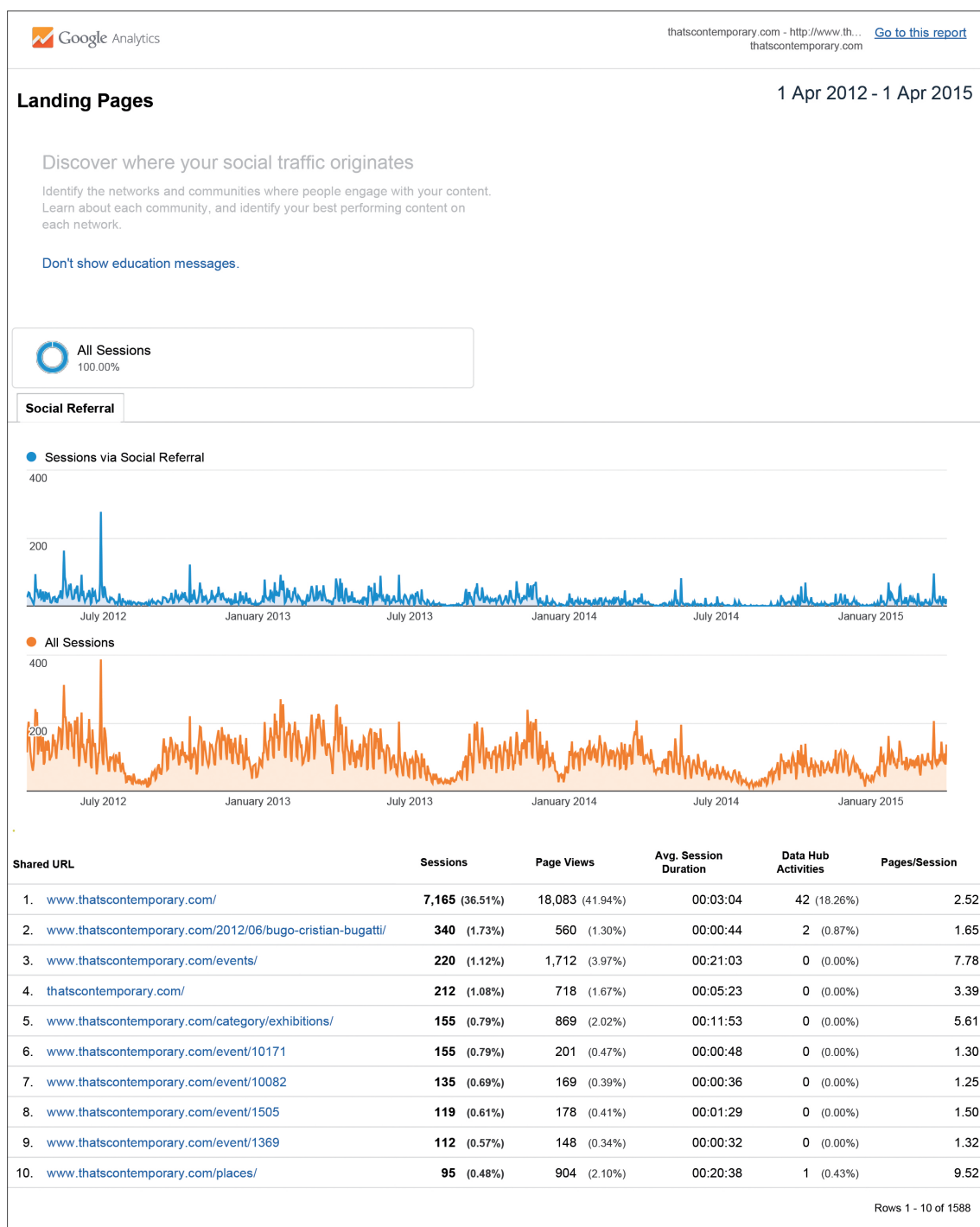


4 ACQUISITION OVERVIEW:
From Social



4 ACQUISITION OVERVIEW:

Usage



APPENDIX VI

RIMESSA (2015)

Written by Traslochi Emotivi and Francesca

Baglietto

Translated into English by Dorota Glanc and

Anna Wilk

RIMESSA*

**Conversation between two people whose identity is unknown to date,
recorded by an individual “authorised to assist”
on 08/07/1932 from 8:26 p.m. to 9:26 p.m. at a hotel bar.**

T: What year is it?

E: Why?

T: You said that the photo dates back to 1937 but the calendar on the wall shows that it is 1936.

E: Where is that calendar? Ah ...Yes ... there was a calendar once. All were passing by and there was a need to understand the day, the date, the time, but no one noticed who was passing beside the sofa or the water falling from the gutter, in those messy buckets in the garden ...You talk about a calendar, and not about why there is a chandelier lit with the sun coming through the window that divides two women, one black and one white, in a room with a red piano. You should understand why the calendar always shows the wrong date.

T: It shows the wrong date because you have always wanted to cloud the issue.

For you every hole in a memory is an opportunity to update the past, losing track of the flowing time.
Do you never think about the future?

E: The tracks, we always have them in a pocket, sometimes we use them and sometimes we do not.
It is a game of attractions. People always need to line them up, to make them ‘fit’, to create a route with a beginning and an end, but he does not realise that in the end, the cards are mixed to start a new game.
The future? Everything is always present. You always have to put (the cards) on the table. Power plays.

T: I do not like your game. And then who are you? Who is she? Who are those women?

Then there was that foolish woman, who actually was pretending ... Exactly. You always pretend.
The history is no longer the history, time collapses. Does it not matter to you who you are?

E: Why do you speak in plural? Exposed to the curious people, I have always been, but I did not think to give the idea of being even split into multiple identities. Do you need to shout that you are lost?

T: I am not lost. For you the reality, the past, the identities are like a script or a show, a schedule of events and you people who cancel, modify or invent at your heart-s content, as needed. But my mind is my thing, sweet, precious, in my mind you can not enter and falsify data and facts.

E: Are you still talking in plural?

T: Why do you continue with this story of the plural? You arrive from all parts. But also in that house of ‘pleasure’, at number 105 of the Avenue, you know how many people I’ve seen going through there, they seemed to be martians. Do you want to tell me that I have been dreaming?

E: The problem of the movement and pluralism is the choice. You can never keep your eyes on something that you have fallen for, for more than an hour or ten minutes. You become submissive, or complicit in inappropriate situations for you. You DIVENTI (GO INTO) another state of mind, RUBI (STEAL), play a game of chance and the TU (YOU SINGULAR) becomes VOI (YOU PLURAL) just like you are pointing out right now. But do you not realise that the dream is wakefulness and vice versa?

Daily do you deal with something or someone? You spend your time. You move without restraints, and if you stop then the only thing you have to ask is, who are you? I drink some wine, I smoke a cigarette, or a pack if needed, and I continue to steal ‘time from time’, or I simply create another time.

There was someone who was saying, “I am the irresponsible game of a timid person that does not have the courage to write stories and is amused by falsifying (sometimes without any aesthetic justification) stories of others”.

T: So you are saying that you live in a time that you create depending on your mood?

It would not be a bad thing if it could be true. So tell me, I’m interested, in which of these time-webs of your creation we are meeting?

E: I’m sorry I missed it, what were we talking about?

***(return, throw-in, depot, warehouses, garage, loss, shoot, vomit, puke)**

T: Are you lost?

Ok. Lets try to remember who you are. On September 26th, 1981, in El Pais someone like you, was revealing not being sure of his existence: *“There are all the authors I have read, all the people I have met, all the women I have loved. All the cities I have visited, all my ancestors ...”* Actually, you, as him, are an accumulation of

stories and events. In this sense it does not matter if you are one or many, if you are real or fake. I will tell you what you are.

A giant, distributed family of epiphytic, those plants, which live thanks to other, living plants. You survive thanks to an uninterrupted reference to real and imaginary sources.

And beware to not be offended because I am not calling you a parasite. The parasite is an unwelcome guest; the epiphyte lives in a gentle form of symbiosis with its master. It is like those who read newspapers of the ones sitting next to them on subway.

You silently read it to then rewrite it in your own way.

E: I am very pleased to see how with how much effort you are trying to find an image for me that is understood and accepted by you as a person and to make me stay a little more calm, but only the restlessness can give us calm.

Come on, I will tell you a story, do not worry.

Late in the morning, around noon, a blonde, Slovenian woman, who was cooking the chicken with potatoes, told me a story of another woman, a mother, who always decided to set the table in a way to put each cutlery, glass, dish, napkin ... different than the other.

Such table, had a tablecloth, plates, glasses, dishes, everything seemed to be in a “magical equilibrium”.

She used to say: *“always respect the circumstances in which different stories can coexist ... remember, every person is from a different tale”*.

The tales are passed DI MADRE AI FIGLI (from MOTHER to CHILDREN), a mother can be of any shape, it can also be a man, a friend, or an old lady. The aerial roots you are talking about are precisely this possibility of being for every moment to be a “new opportunity”.

I will be all of them or none of them, I will be the other without knowing the other who has contemplated my dream, my wakefulness.

I AM THAT I AM, I AM THAT AM I, AM I THAT I AM ?, AM I I THAT AM ?

The family, the origin, your being in the virtual and elusive society of decomposition, of the FRAMMENTO , CAMBIA CONTINUAMENTE, (FRAGMENT, KEEPS CHANGING).

The wind, if it really always goes around, takes you in its perpetual motion, the POSSIBILITA' (POSSIBILITY), the stories that need to be lived as your own, or just to discover, because we are animals always in search of our house and the why.

Take the Trasloco (Move) as an example. Maximum of the expression of change and of the dispersion of belongings and memories.

A slow and frantic race toward the word AROMA, there was also somebody who wrote a book about it many years ago.

Everything always happens here and now.

I have chosen to live there and I will not deny that it is often that I do not remember most of the things that I have experienced, but there is always someone or something waiting around the corner being ready to awake my memory.

In the years of great migration there is always that someone who asks for a house, a job, someone who comes and goes ... I want to listen to these movements that too often are in the grip of LUPA DI MARE (FOG), that light fog ... which meanwhile destroys, that subtle, silent fog.

What about taking another coffee?

T: The journey, the move, the return, the luxury of forgetting to then find the pleasure of remembering and that of narrating, maybe of inventing. In general, to track the epiphany of things and relationships that make them appear to be like, that is what you tell me, this is that what you are. But you are unsettled and I ask you to slow down, you asked me to make you slow down.
That is what I am here for. Stop yourself.
A coffee, I will prepare for you.
Think of one thing. And tell me about it.
In German, the etymology of the word “thing” means “combination” or “assembly” to resolve an issue.
We are here to understand how Traslochi Emotivi are things inasmuch a heterogeneous combination of hybrid elements: people, objects, ideas and emotional states. Know who you are does not matter, but what is important is to understand the issue that is behind this combination.

E: Haha! “Think of one thing and tell me about it”.

There are those who think how to enter a cafe in the morning asking just for an egg on a plate and those who send you a picture of a face with a smile and half asleep eyes right after they wake up, from their bed still.

I noticed it when I was working at the HOTEL SPLENDOR.

Every morning I used to prepare breakfast for guests, each of them needed special attention, even the one who, with a gesture, referred to his daily black coffee. Everyone was still in the limbo of awakening, those who disguised it more, and those who disguised it less, those who attacked you talking incessantly and those who had the energy to read an entire newspaper. I was observing them and doing things that would coincide with their worlds, but what gave me joy was when the right coffee started a chain reaction of stories that the tea lady, or the lychee juice lady shared with those being next to them.

Once upon a time, that exact tea lady, with a Spanglish accent, during her aperitif with the usual “Americano” (famous cocktail at the Splendor) told us about a meeting with a lady in the ‘20s London, which reminded her of a secret thought-still that changed her life; one day talking with us at the Hotel, she decided to make a tribute for the woman, and “É SENZA” was born, a perfume of that ancient wisdom, “the essence of the essences”, a memory of cinnamon, lemon and patchouli.

It could have been at that moment that I realised I had no choice.

The essence of doing, so discrete, objective and very difficult in these days.

Everyday life pushed us towards fragmenting ourselves in these entities, analysing every single change, my body suffers a lot, but it is like relying on time that you live, in every move you make you lose it and find it, and in that way you occasionally find your body.

Bombarded with images, information, we never knew enough, it was not only a newspaper, there was the story of all, those invented or not, from newspapers we passed to cell phones, to the virtual, to social media, and step by step more and more of us was lost in trying to capture everything in detail. LOST.

So you did not know who you were, at times we had to write it, sometimes we do not give a damn and continued to ‘collect’, even though often the wind made something disappear and continued its motion. So if there was a message that we were to pass on, it could have happened anywhere; It did not matter if it was in a house, in the roadmap’s house, in a gate, in a shop window, in a shop, in a book, in a hotel, in a bar, we found ourselves making art in every place in which we felt the famous : TING! During those movements we came across a carpet seller, who had moved from Kabul to Rome. He found a family, the one in which “there is also order the mess”. A collector of figs that he had planted one of kaki survived Hiroshima into a labyrinth of lavender in the south of Italy. When the slow swing of Brubeck was played, two dancers attacked with a tango, in a garage called TANDA, there was year ‘56. And then we ate in LA TAVOLA, the smallest restaurant in Zurich, where there was always a queue, if there were more than two of us, but that one table in the restaurant window was like a promise and satisfaction of our most intimate cuisine desires. One day their RICETTACOLO was given to us during a test of their famous Bloody Mary Jelly, and that was how we found out that none of their recipes had been written by them! Over the years, they had collected more than 100 memories of customers who stopped by after midnight to talk of their memories of food, drugs, sex and games ... I was there, and believe me, if you go there, that sidewalk still exudes the memory, I think.

In 45 degrees of that summer, there was always someone who was lost, someone screaming and laughing at the same time, “the exhausted muses” of the night clubs were phased pampered with a glass of the red wine, a Brazilian photographer often snapped some portrait and then divided her Thai cigar with the owner, and so, in “vino veritas”, there was always a game of chess, a duet, an emotional pastime in the night, PARODIA (PARODY) in a style that never kept up with time, was always disconnected, but present.

Always on the road ... even now. Sometimes also standing still.

Ah! Mm .. coffee, I do not remember you preparing it so well. Some sugar?

T: It has been a while since I stopped liking the taste of coffee. But for years I have been drinking it in the same manner, but each time disgusted I sip it with fervour trying, sometimes in vain, to retain the grimaces. Despite it being a punishment, I can not stop drinking it, it is a habit, a familiar scenario and a comfort for me and for people offering it to me. Moreover, I have always hated changes and that is why I look at your life with that curiosity, not only due to all the stories that you tell me, but also for your strength of being a part of the game, always. Those stories become yours.

I, for years, have preferred to look at lives of others from the screen, not necessarily virtual, but as events, which I do not want to be a part of. The stories I read in books, look at on photographs, that I listen from those who tell them to me.

Everything stays always two steps away from me.

But you do not have distance.

Maybe it is this lack of distance that creates art?

Narciso has once said to Boccadoro: *“Our goal is not to transform into each other, [...] but to learn seeing who the other one is: our opposite and our completion. [...] You are an artist, I am an intellectual. You sleep on your mother’s chest, I keep an eye open in the desert.”* But who cares about me, it is your fault that you make me willing to “open up” and reflect in RETROSPETTIVA (RETROSPECTIVE).

Like during a psychoanalytic session, you hold a mirror to prove yourself. But let’s go back to talking about you. Because I understood that now you implicitly want me to participate. Meanwhile, tell me if you have had already decided the date of the RIMESSA*?

E: The date is the October 24th, 2015, but there is still time until then.

Meanwhile I put everything online at the disposal of the curious ones, and someone is coming to visit me in CASACICCA, do you remember it? Debora The Queen lived there ... red and mirrors ... I think I will have to renovate it in a while.

I like talking to you, and maybe it is true that we should just listen to each other and sometimes make a SHAKE IT of everything, today it is quite fashionable, but only the second part.

Stuck in the middle with you ...

I would like to talk to you about my feelings, my thoughts towards this strange movement of the world, what is missing or not, the continuing colonisations, ambiguity, interests, borders, territories, the walls, networks, houses of garbage, the smiles, the diplomacy, the abandonment, the Mafia, the favours that we have looked for, created, fought against, stigmatised. They tell us stories on paper every day, and fill us with judgments, solutions, information which will already be different tomorrow. They all are so confident.

I found myself in the desert a long time ago, on a border, in the Middle East, and I could see walk, walk and walk ... and then come back in those places, in enclosure of iron nets, where they were awaiting decisions of the next movements.

I saw people on the edge of a motionless sea, which was dancing at the same time, and having sex in a pool of fresh water, laughing at dawn under the influence of LSD.

I saw MUOVERE VERSO (MOVING TOWARD) ideas that I did not understand, because they simply did not have the same cultural origin as me, and I had to find a compromise, understand how much I had to let go of my habits for them to match with the ones that I had in front of me.

I saw the same lady for years, in the same garage in East London, with her piece of newspaper opened on a '70s face when she opened the garage with just the first objects, clothes and books thrown by others.

I saw a stabbing and a score of people who did not bother to move to save them, or a man who stopped in the same cafe every day for a croissant, milk, and to smoke two cigarettes trying to understand where I came from.

I saw COPERTE (BLANKETS), for those who were leaving, but would have stayed to defend their homes.

In the car I spoke with a merchant who told me about shamans, artists, art as a human need, which, when lost, tries to understand what to believe in, what can still move him, make him think, in such a pragmatic, rational, dry society, where people constantly cut themselves off from realness.

I saw a man and his daughter drinking wine on a rock telling each other how they found themselves, eating nuts and octopus.

A converted man with a baby tiger in a park in Milan in the 60's.

A country woman, who gave away trunks and umbrellas ...

A local freak telling his stories about Mafia that had saved his fellow villagers, giving them money, removing the school, promising pignolata (italian pastry) and trust for children, which they sometimes killed one, but it was in the name of honor.

I think there are hardly any left in that village.

I saw a girl raped. And an eight-year-old boy asking me to marry him.

I saw the Howl of Ginsberg screaming and Mrs. Yoko Ono telling her works to old American collectors.

I saw a Bullet Space in the Lower East Side, inhabited by the son of an Italian immigrant, famous pastry chef of New York in the '20s.

An elegant ninety-year-old lady, who told me stories about artists, architects and poets, who lived in her home and cooked couscous and danced on tables after several bottles of red wine.

An actor in his red house, a singer in London, the city of tea, a Sardinian woman who gave birth to a Rose with a father who drew torches, a Jamaican woman, who calmed restless spirits with her presence.

The lady of her caravan and windmills, that was trying to find herself by combining earth and dust with her breath.

A lady from Salaria, who lived one hundred years, and had cuts of newspaper in the drawer, in one of them there was written *STO BENE (I AM FINE)!* Juri Gagarin returned from the first space mission.

They wanted to go to the moon, who knows if they have really gone there, astronauts light as feathers, emigrate to the moon without a passport and a home, in that house of Jolanda pervaded by an ancient flavour, stop Settebagni.

I saw tears, laugh and singing at the same time in a house in Albania, for a young bride migrating to Greece.

I have seen people coming from places that adopted junk language, in the tobacco market, of corn, sunflower seeds, and then all sleeping under the same bridge, all on the same boat, with the same blankets, without thinking about places, borders, differences; just sleep, falling in fog, into an endless game of mind, which at that time silents and explores “the unoccupied territories”.

I saw you dancing for a whole day and walking on the roadside waiting for a van to the town nearby.

I saw cell phones and computers taking places of human, I saw fans on the chest fanning solid principles and two people at the bar telling each other about their life project, in the same street corner, every day at the same time, and perhaps the same was happening in a another country.

I saw a dog biting another dog for a melon rind.

A man slipping on a banana peel.

...

You see, there is a globe in every step we take, every face we meet, every dream or home we visit. Ah! The manager of the Hotel Splendor was gathering and inviting guests each day to leave a question written down. The answers sometimes came, sometimes did not. When you closed the hotel, all the answers started coming, by post, on request at reception, and everyone slowly, some with a smile, some with intricate faces trying to to understand, returned home with a precious gift.

I also decided to write to the Director, so I asked him, “it is better to leave or arrive ? or... move or stand still?” ... I do not remember well. His answer was that there would not have been any response. He had decided to use my answer by telling his story of a director, wondering if all the answers he had given the guests perhaps were a farce, or just a natural sharing of ideas.

Now when you made me remember this, I think that it was critical for me to take the way that I wanted to, there would have always been someone to “host” in the answers of my questions. *E ALL'ORA, A PASSO D'UOMO (AND SO, A CRAWL SPACE)*,

I was dreaming of revolution in my identity, in the desire to build a possible “different” view of the history they told me at school and in newspapers.

Perhaps Traslochi Emotivi sells illusions, but maybe it is the only way to tell a man that there is still a choice, to live our “abyss” through the art.

The art, the life, not following the times, but being synchronised by a strange flow of currents, with a chain reaction, they never allow dropping “the ball”, they hold it high, low, then they pass it, and then it flies, you cannot see it, it is fast, then you hold it in your hand but it never touches the ground.

Well ...

You have weed? Maybe I can remember something more.

T: Dear, what weed are you talking about? I have never had it.
I must admit that despite this I feel drunk.
In fact, I would say debauched by euphoria, images, words and
jealousy. Do not take it personally but *“I feel that it is time for me to go”*.
Is that a Volkswagen outside?
Are you leaving or coming back?

E:

APPENDIX VII

An account on the process versus financial sustainability

In the first chapter, I illustrated how *that's contemporary's* hybrid exhibitionary spaces are based on a system that thrives on user-generated symbolic capital. Even though, my research does not analyzed how Giulia and I monetized such capital and how this financialization has translated into *that's contemporary's* exhibitionary networks. The following text illustrates how we developed a plan of financial sustainability.

From an economic angle, the abolition of fees for place nodes to

feature on the platform rendered uncertain the way in which *that's contemporary* could become economically sustainable. From the beginning, this turned into an issue undermining the growth of the project (✖ attribute scripted in: performance / obstacle). To face this problem, we envisaged the constitution of a non-profit organization, which would have had access to public funding and private donations to support the large part of the expenditures of running a platform and its parallel activities. Despite the fact that we assessed the foundation of a non-profit in the script as an obstacle due to our lack of experience in management and administration (✖ attribute scripted in: authority / obstacle), from the start we embarked in a process of moving towards institutionalization. In October 2011, Giulia, Andrea and I co-founded a non-profit organization and started to apply for public funding. Still, in the first two years of existence, *that's contemporary* ran thanks to the drive of a variegated team of enthusiastic volunteers motivated by symbolical gratification.

that's contemporary's press releases



In 2012, after the conference at Bocconi University, Giulia and I managed to weave connections with the local administration, in particular the Council Consultant for Contemporary Art, Paola Nicolin, who at the time was one of Counsellor Stefano Boeri's closest collaborators. Because they expressed interest in the platform, we were hoping to obtain financial support from the council. A hypothesis could have been to propose *that's contemporary* as the platform of MET, the territorially distributed museum discussed previously, as the counsellor was planning to create an online platform to support the project. However, the distinctiveness of the two projects was made very clear by the difference in the typology of spaces that each wanted to engage with. Because we did not want to give up on our identity, the merge with MET was not a very appealing option. In parallel to negotiations with the public administration, which unfortunately ended with the dismissal of the Counsellor, we tried to pursue the avenue of private donations and sponsorships. At the end of 2012, we raised a considerable donation from Rottapharm | Madaus, a pharmaceutical company, that allowed us to strengthen the capabilities of our database and create *That's App*. Given the successful outcome, Giulia and I continued to conceive ways to stimulate backing that were in line with this philanthropic approach.

One of the most convincing proposals we came up with, was the idea that the exhibitionary space provided by the platform could have been financially supported by a limited selection of established galleries, operating as patrons and mentors of the extended exhibitionary network. In this way, instead of providing a service just for the galleries able to afford a fee, *that's contemporary* would have created a self-sustained exhibitionary organism, where

Email sent to *that's contemporary's* accountant about the new patron model. Attached to the email is the form for subscribing as a Patron to *that's contemporary*

financially stronger place nodes would have acted as champions of financially weaker place nodes, thus, validating and reinforcing the whole idea of a distributed exhibitionary network locally anchored in Milan. Reading behind the structure of this model is the belief that the impact of small place nodes' activities manifests in a long-term contribution to the art field; a contribution from which larger-scale galleries also benefit. This model has been informed by the report 'Value, Measure, Sustainability: Ideas towards the future of the small-scale visual art sector' (2012) produced as an outcome of a Symposium organized by *Common Practice*, a group of small arts organisations based in London. The report gives a pronounced, 'consideration to the relationship between small and large organizations, enabling a better understanding of the importance the work of the former has in success of the latter' (Common Practice, 2012, p. 16). The report claims that a beneficial approach would involve larger organizations publicly recognizing the role of smaller ones, 'in enabling artists to develop and produce important projects, which are later exhibited or collected

The image shows a screenshot of an email and a form. The email is from Francesco Baglietto to Angelo Roveri, dated 9 April 2013. It discusses the possibility of becoming a patron of *that's contemporary*. The form is titled 'MODULO DI ISCRIZIONE' and contains fields for personal and contact information, as well as a section for 'CHIEDERE' (Request) with checkboxes for different types of patronage.

Email Content:

Francisco Baglietto - francesco@thatstemporary.com
 To: Angelo Roveri - a.roveri@tarotax.com
 Cc: Giulia Rester - giulia@thatstemporary.com, Parnavici Alessia - a.parnavici@tarotax.com, Silvia Clerici - silvia@thatstemporary.com
 URGENTE. Accordo di associazione per patronato.

2 Attachments, 95 KB

Gentile Angelo Roveri,
 sono Francesco Baglietto dell'associazione that's contemporary.
 Le scrivo perché stiamo attuando degli accordi di associazione per una serie di gallerie che si assocerebbero come PATRON versando una cifra di 1.000 euro annui ratealizzabili su due quote da 500 euro l'una.
 In allegato trova la presentazione dell'accordo e il modulo per l'associazione. Vorremmo cogliere l'occasione che alcune gallerie hanno accettato e mandare il modulo il più presto possibile. Anche tu stesso.
 Potrebbe farti sapere se la forma usata è dentro alla norma?
 Grazie
 Francesco Baglietto.

Form Content:

that's contemporary
 MODULO DI ISCRIZIONE

LA SCELTA
 CON SEDE LEGALE IN
 A. LOCALITÀ
 PARTITA IVA
 TELEFONO
 EMAIL

NELLA PERSONA DEL TITOLARE
 NOME A. N.

CHIEDERE:
 di aderire all'associazione culturale non profit that's contemporary in qualità di PATRON per l'anno 2013, offrendo impegnandosi in un rapporto di patronage su 2 anni attraverso il versamento di 1.000 euro annui ratealizzabili su due quote da 500 euro l'una, a maggio e a novembre. Segnala inoltre di provvedere entro il 1 maggio 2013 al versamento della prima quota annuale di 500 euro a mezzo:
☐ contante ☐ assegno intestato a: associazione non profit that's contemporary ☐ bonifico BANC. (Ricevuta di versamento con data)

Il PATRON ha aderito a:
 - trattamento del proprio logo nella sezione PATRON (presente nella sezione About del portale www.thatstemporary.com)
 - aggiornamento semestrale sulle attività di that's contemporary

by larger organizations and which form the bedrock of their contemporary programmes' (ibid, p. 8). In accordance with *Common Practice*, our proposal argued that, 'the intangible assets of small organizations provide essential material for larger organisations and commercial galleries' (ibid, p. 8). For this reason, we claimed that the financial contribution asked from strong place nodes should have been interpreted as an investment into the exhibitionary network they were collectively occupying with other place nodes. Such investment would have recouped value because it would have impacted on the activities of weaker place nodes, which would have been exhibited in the platform reaching a wider public and more opportunity for appreciation. In this way, these place nodes would have accrued symbolic capital and contributed to the symbolical and cultural validation of the whole exhibitionary network and its place nodes.

Unfortunately the number of galleries that accepted this proposal was too low to gather together a solid group of patrons to activate such a model. Rather than a systematized mechanism, which was what we are aiming at, we could only benefit from sporadic donations, which in the long run could not cover the costs for developing and maintaining *that's contemporary*. We think that the reason for this lies in the fact that *that's contemporary* was still an emerging project at the time and did not have that influential network of contacts that these galleries were aspiring to. Besides, these established galleries seemed to favor the idea of a platform featuring only the more nationally and internationally well-known organizations in Milan. One year later, this desire was fulfilled by the new enterprise Milano Art Bulletin in which these galleries eventually invested.

In the meantime we started to consider new ways to sustain the platform that could supplement the intermittent revenue provided by donations. We attempted to strengthen our fundraising strategies and explore new forms of income and

ways to render the platform sustainable. This direction was also enforced by the wider political shift happening in the Italian cultural policies. As a matter of fact, *that's contemporary* began in a period in which non-profit organizations had to deal with decreasing levels of public subsidy. New assessment models developed by public bodies and private foundations led to a preference for organizations that aimed to become, at least in part, self-sustaining. Therefore, over the years we explored different possibilities for an organizational model able to coexist with complementary philanthropic forms of backing, more entrepreneurial approaches and resources of shared practice. We succeeded in the establishment of a series of key partnerships with institutions such as Careof DOCVA Viafarini, which secured the free use of a common workspace at DOCVA, an archive containing portfolios from Italian artists. We instituted forms of cooperation with Start Milano and Exibart and made partnerships with major Italian cultural institutions such as Milanese contemporary and modern art fair miart. We worked with Museo del Novecento, Fabbrica del Vapore, Frigoriferi Milanesi, Teatro i and The Blank who in exchange for promoting them on our platform, gave us free use of their physical and digital exhibitionary spaces, which we utilised in different occasions, along with the benefit of being associated with such established organizations. In addition to these forms of exchange, we began applying for business-oriented programs for creative entrepreneurial projects to obtain grants supporting the process of conceiving, launching and testing a financially sustainable model for cultural and/or digital oriented start-ups. In this phase, we partially developed *that's contemporary* within the context of these programs. Designing and writing presentations to apply for these programs pushed Giulia and I to think of *that's contemporary* from the point of view of potential investors, or public bodies financing cultural projects. We conceived various models, many of which could not be developed in the

end and that are beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, these experiences led us to learn how to financially sustain hybrid exhibitionary spaces – through the creation of advertising opportunities targeted to commercial galleries, cultural institutions and companies involved with cultural projects that want to communicate their activities using advertising banners. Also through sending editorial reports with our newsletter to customized mailing lists, or by using our social media. Furthermore, we started to develop curatorial and promotional projects for third parties, in which we use our curatorial expertise to conceive and organize digital interfaces and physical events for public institutions and private companies.

APPENDIX VIII

Selection of author's projects related to this research

CONFERENCE PAPERS

BAGLIETTO, FRANCESCA (2015). 'Reading Exhibitions in The Post-Internet Age.' **CAA Annual Conference**, New York, February

BAGLIETTO, FRANCESCA (2014). 'The Rise of Hybrid Exhibitionary Space.' **ISEA 2014 Location**, at Zayed University, Dubai, November

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

BAGLIETTO, FRANCESCA; TRASLOCHI EMOTIVI, (2015) Rimessa [exhibition publication], **CanepaNeri**, Milan. September

BAGLIETTO, FRANCESCA (2014). 'Alla Scoperta dell'East Londinese.' **Exibart**, April.

SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

'Crowdfunding, shared ownership and usership in art collecting.' Seminar. **Wimbledon College of Arts**, London, November 2016.

'Object Narratives: A Dialogue on

Assemblage.' Workshop for MA design and art students from Manchester Metropolitan University. **CFCCA – Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art**, October 2014

'Where is the exhibition? Where is the archive?' **Practice Exchange**, Chelsea College of Arts, London, June 2012

DIGITAL PROJECTS

JUN. 2016 – OCT. 2016

BEART ONLINE is a crowdfunding platform for art making

JUL. 2014 – MAY. 2015

AIR – ARTINRESIDENCE is a web platform dedicated to artist residences by FareArte in collaboration with That's Contemporary and GAI - Italian Young Artists Association with support from the Region of Lombardy, Open Care and Cariplo Foundation

JAN. 2014 – MAY 2015

THAT'S VALLEY is a mobile app for iOS and Android commissioned by Cultural District of Camonica Valley and developed and curated by That's Contemporary

JAN. 2013 – MAY 2015

THAT'S APP is a mobile app for iOS and Android developed by That's Contemporary with support from Rottapharm | Madaus

OCT. 2011 – JULY 2016

WWW.THATSCONTEMPORARY.COM is a web platform dispatching information about contemporary art exhibitions and events in Milan

CURATED PARTICIPATORY EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS

MAR. 16TH, 2013

THE ART PACEMAKER is a running event by Franco Ariaudo e Driant Zeneli curated by That's Contemporary with the support of Rottapharm|Madaus and the collaboration of a group of galleries and non-profits in Milan

SEP. 13TH - OCT. 8TH, 2012

S.A.V.E. MILAN is one-month fictional investigation by Ambra Pittoni e Paul-Flavien Enriquez-Sarano (Ze Coeupel) curated by That's Contemporary and hosted by Museum of the Twentieth Century, DOCVA Viafarini, Frigoriferi Milanesi and Lucie Fontaine

AUG. 12TH - 24TH, 2012

IO TE E IL MARE is an artistic residency in Lipari (Sicily) curated by Francesca Baglietto and Amy McDonnell and produced by That's Contemporary.

JUL. 4TH JULY, 2012

TANGO ILLEGAL is a dancing occupation organized by That's Contemporary at Fabbrica del Vapore in collaboration with START Milano and Careof DOCVA ViaFarini.

APR. 13TH, 2012

THAT'S MEET is one-night exhibition with Ambra Pittoni, Traslochi Emotivi and El Topo curated by That's Contemporary and hosted by Ca' Laghetto Association in Milan

AWARDS

Awarded in the competition **fUNDER₃₅ for Cultural Enterprises** by ACRI – The Italian Savings Banks Association, 2015

Awarded with the **fellowship 'Creativity and design for new markets and new needs'** by Polytechnic University of Milan, 2014

Awarded in the competition **'Creative Companies in Alpine Space'** promoted by Lombardy Region, 2013

Awarded at the competition App4Mi with That's App nominated **'Best App for Culture and Education'** by the Mayor of Milan and Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera, 2013

That's Contemporary was awarded with the 1st prize at the **European Design Award**, category 'Promotional Website', 2012

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222

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237

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