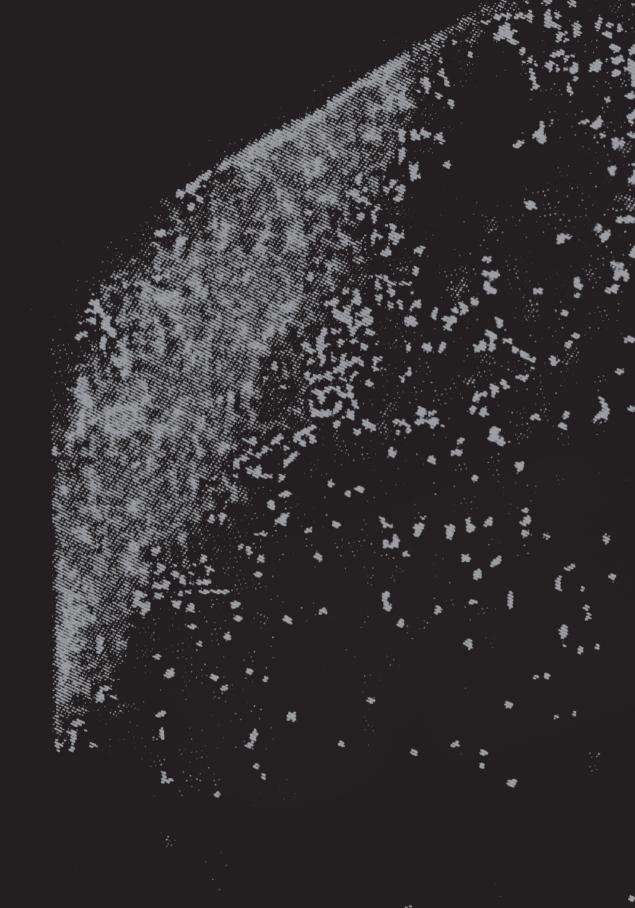
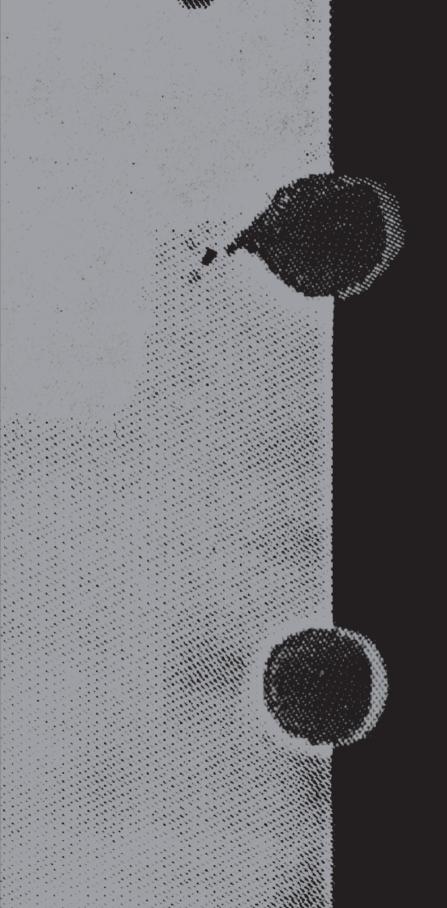
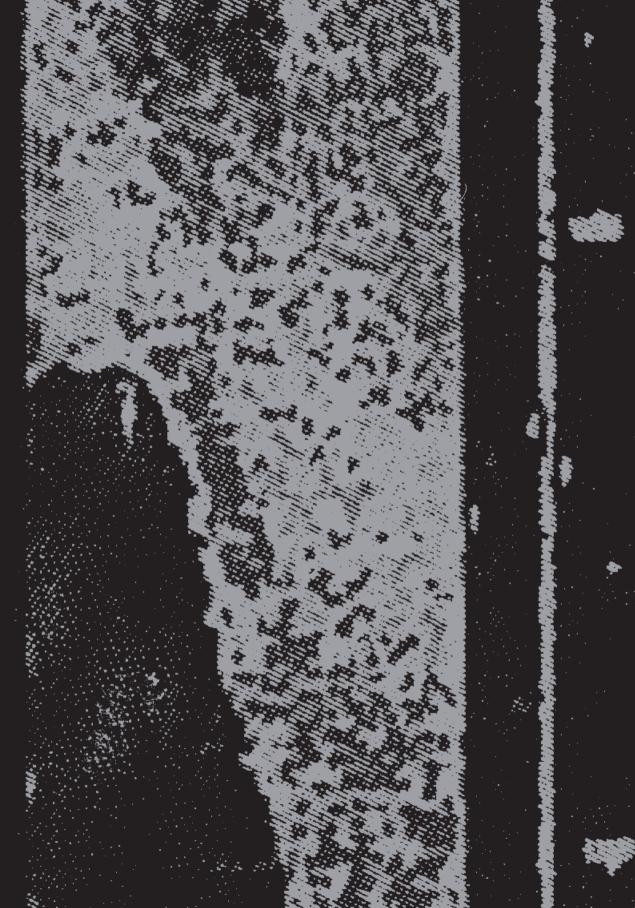
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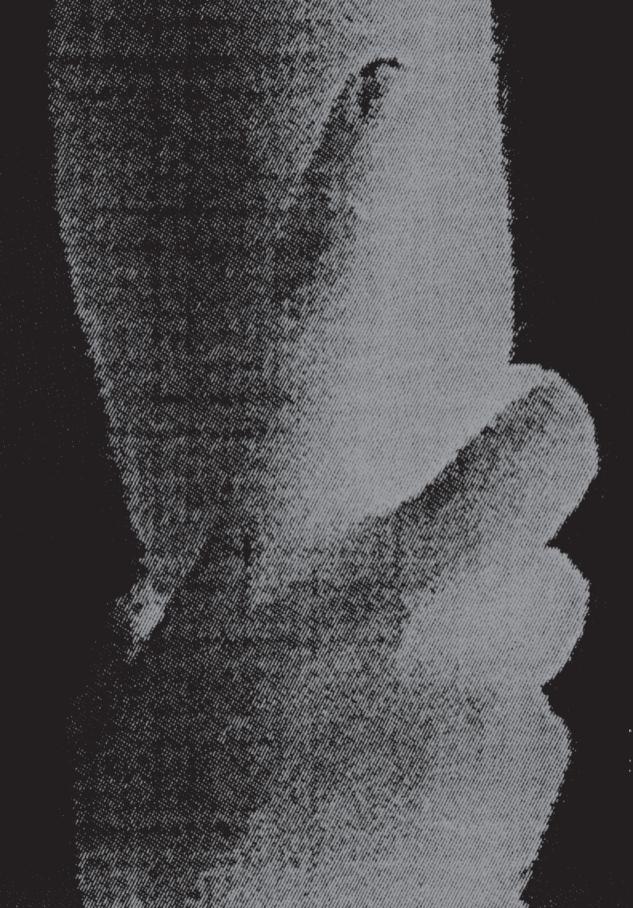








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Re: Invitation to contribute a text to the journal *Blackout 1: Olivetti, poesia concreta*

Dear _____,

We are sitting here at ECAV in our current working place, which is the salle de réunion at the administration. Our fingers are typing this letter to invite you to contribute a text within the *Art Work(ers)* research project.

We are thinking about how closing factories and the use of industrial ruins have affected our ways of working in the arts, and of the promises of creative economies. What narratives have been created to tell stories of art and industrial production as well as of deindustrialisation. We are looking at historical examples such as EAT, Artist Placement Group, Equipo 57 & Grupo Y, Solidarnos & Ryszard Wasko, or Agricola Cornelia, whose work emerges in between art and (industrial) production modes. We are thinking of perrugues (homers) and strategies to "reinterpret" the Taylorist use of machines with Situationist strategies. The guestion that we have in mind is less "why X has happened" but rather "why the alternatives Y did not take place".

Two scenarios have become particularly important during the research: Chippis, the site of the former Aluminium factory since 1908; and Ivrea, where the Olivetti type-writing machine factory started in the same year. How differently two factories have shaped the cities, societies and

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cultural scenes in which they were located and where they developed their idea of labour.

In our research, we observed the involvement of artists and writers in the production of experimental publishing within industrial projects. Among them, poets such as Leonardo Sinisgalli would start the monthly magazine Civiltà delle macchine (1953-79), while art historian Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti initiated SeleARTE (1952-65). They addressed the workers, the cultural scene and a wider audience through contributions by Italo Calvino, Nino Franchina, Umberto Eco and Eugenio Carmi among others. All of them workers, each one in their field, but more often in a transdisciplinary setting. The Olivetti typing machine factory was deeply connected to its publishing house. the Edizioni di Comunità: books such as La condition ouvrière by Simone Weil were translated, not only for the sake of patronage or pedagogical emancipation of the workers, but rather to support the reflection on labour and production in social and cultural terms. It is also for these reasons that a wide number of novels, magazines and poems inscribed within the letteratura industriale trend, emerged around utopian factory projects in the 1950s and 1960s.

Among the gestures that we have thought of for the *Art Work(ers)* research project, we therefore decided to re-activate these forms of publishing. We have planned two issues of the *Blackout* magazine, and would like to invite you to contribute to the issue 2.

Our idea would be to collect in *Blackout 2* writings on Olivetti.

Blackout 2: Olivetti, poesia concreta will be phrased around the following contents:

- 1 Editorial: Invitation to Contribute a Text
- 5 The Olivetti Community. Or How to Reinvent the Art School Donatella Bernardi
- 15 Olivetti formes et recherche. Industry and Contemporary Culture – an Olivetti Historical Exhibition (1969-1971)
 Marcella Turchetti / Associazione Archivio Storico Olivetti
- 27 A chiare lettere / Spelled out. Renato Guttuso's *Boogie Woogie* at the Olivetti Federica Martini

41 The Worker and Neurosis Alexandros Kyriakatos

- 51 On Lost Opportunities.
 Brief and Rhapsodic
 Considerations on the figure of Adriano Olivetti
 Andrea Bellini
- 60 Biographies
- 64 Colophon

For your contribution, we would like to propose the following conditions:

- The salary is 500 CHF.
- We wish to discuss further, through coffee or a skype, the general context of your contribution.
- We would be glad to share

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materials (texts, images, videos) from our research, if you wish so.

- We would like to receive from you an abstract of 250 words including the main points of your text, and a biography.
- We will discuss with you the timeline for your submission in accordance with our editorial process.

Let us know if you are interested in this collaboration and if you have the time to participate.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Warm wishes,

Petra Köhle, Robert Ireland, Federica Martini For Art Work(ers)

Or how to reinvent the art school



Let me start with a few words about my own interest as an artist in Olivetti's activity. His company, as you certainly know, left a vast body of work, of which I am far from being an expert. But artists can be passionate about things and use them as they wish without necessarily being experts. My position is therefore that of an amateur who deeply admires the social and political dimension of this company's history.

My introduction to the Olivetti Community is divided into 6 sub-sections: 1) A Republic founded on labour; 2) Olivetti's success factors and values; 3) Camillo; 4) Adriano; 5) the Community; 6) Aesthetics and ethics.

1) A Republic founded on labour

Among the body of documents that I perused for my research on Adriano Olivetti, an interview with the

lawyer Alfredo Galasso, professor of private law, banking law and anti-mafia law at the University of Palermo, caught my attention. In order to discuss Adriano Olivetti and what he incarnated during his lifetime, Galasso begins by quoting two articles of the Italian Constitution (1947).

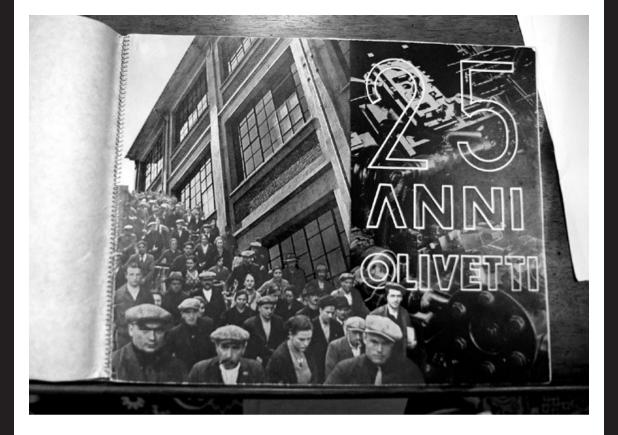
The first is article 1, from the section "Fundamental Principles":

Italy is a democratic Republic founded on labour. Sovereignty belongs to the people and is exercised by the people in the forms and within the limits of the Constitution.

Galasso then quotes article 41, from the section "Title III, Economic Rights and Duties":

Private economic enterprise is free. It may not be carried out against the common good or in such a manner that could damage safety, liberty and human dignity.

According to its Constitution, drafted in 1947, Italy is supposed to be a democratic republic founded on labour. The story of the Olivetti company, especially under the direction of Adriano Olivetti (1901–1960), son of founder Camillo Olivetti (1868–1943) who opened the first factory in Ivrea (Canavese region) in 1908, is indeed Italian, republican, and democratic. Of course it is also an economic story, the story of what one may call a form of "socialist" capitalism, of a utopia that was actually put into practice, and whose development, articulation and expansion were made possible by the fortune of the Olivetti company. In 1955, Adriano gave a speech at the



inauguration of the Pozzuoli factory, near Naples. Simply titled "To the workers", the speech was an opportunity to reiterate the connection he made between capitalism and socialism, the former being a means to overcome the limitations of the latter: higher salaries, reduced working hours, and, above all, the possibility of a more decent life through the promotion of spiritual, scientific, artistic and cultural values as well as ideals of justice, that can happen only through the resolution of the violent conflict between capital and labour.¹

2) Olivetti's success factors and values Among the many factors that contributed to the company's success throughout the years, one can mention:

1 Adriano Olivetti, Ai Lavoratori, Discorsi agli operai di Pozzuoli e Ivrea presentati da Luciano Gallino, Comunità Editrice, Roma/Ivrea, 2012, pp. 27–30.

1) the international

approach (Olivetti was one of the first Italian multinational corporations and opened a number of retail outlets in Europe and abroad even before the Second World War;² 2) the development of innovative and exclusive products, thanks to the presence of active researchers inside the company, as a means to keep the prices high and outside the rules of competition and to reinvest the income in research and workers welfare; 3) human resources management and relations (library, a research centre on the psychology of labour, holyday camps, longer maternity leaves, etc.). According to some experts, Adriano Olivetti anticipated the transition from industrial to post-industrial societies, not only in terms of knowledge economy (paying for the university tuition of talented employees, giving workers inside the company access to mechanics, electro-mechanics, industrial history, political science, civic education and art history classes), but also by actively involving the workers in the life and evolution of the company.

These overarching values are shared by the founding father Camillo and by his son Adriano: as engineers and industrial entrepreneurs, they considered the "factory as a tool" of social transformation and cultural production. These principles constitute the conceptual or even spiritual starting point, i.e. the soul of their lifelong achievement: I am thinking of the vision of investing practical skills and practical production in the promotion of social change, better life conditions and cultural initiatives – and idea known as the *Comunità*

Olivetti.

2 The brochure "25 anni Olivetti", published in 1933, mentions Egypt, Tunisia, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Syria, Rhodes, Albania, Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Yugoslavia, Norway, Holland, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and Hungary.

3) Camillo In his essay "Une expérience d'hétérotopie communautaire?"³, Francesco Novara (1923–2009), Professor of psychology at the University of Turin, mentions that Camillo was a socialist who celebrated the 1st of May with his workers despite the prohibition of the fascist regime, and who organised meetings in the factory yard to keep his workers informed about how the company was doing. He also took care of his workers' accommodation and healthcare, and granted interest-free loans. To Camillo, "the entrepreneur is a producer and an organiser, not a speculator".4 Adriano inherited from his father an aversion to earning money by any means other than work. Let me add one last remark about Camillo's relationship to his workers. When his son Adriano was reorganising the factory, Camillo apparently told him: "whatever you do, do not fire any worker under the excuse of restructuring, for the forced cessation of work is the worst thing that can ever happen to the working class".5

4) Adriano

Adriano Olivetti graduated from the Polytechnic University of Turin in 1924. In 1925 he travelled to the United States and, after his return, he joined the family business in Ivrea, where he had been working since the age of 13. In 1925, he started working in human resources, where he put into effect several changes in the organisation of production. In 1938, at the age of 37, he took on the presidency of the Olivetti company and launched a theoretical reflection and practical

3 Published in Isabelle Berrebi-Hoffmann, ed., Politiques de l'intime, Des utopies sociales d'hier au monde du travail d'aujourd'hui, 2009.

4 In me non c'è che futuro..., a film by Michele Fasano, 144 min, 2011. Scientific experts: Patrizia Bonifazio, Davide Cadeddu, Francesco Novara, Emilio Renzi. 5 Ibid. experimentation on the factory's working methods. He founded the journal *Tecnica ed* organizzazione ("Technique and Organisation"), devoted to the improvement of the production structures of companies, social services, industrial architecture, professional training, and the education and personal development of employees. In Ivrea, Adriano built new factories, offices, cafeterias, nurseries, and kindergartens. In 1937, he reduced the weekly working hours from 47 to 45, ahead of the national regulation of the issue.

In his youth, Adriano adhered to the principles of *"corporativismo"*, the early manifestation of fascist syndicalism, whose aim was for the workers of all classes to unite in a common fight against capitalism and communism. *"Corporativismo"* included two tendencies: one was associated with the fascist party, while the other followed an autonomist ideal. After the former tendency got the upper hand, Adriano rapidly cut all ties with fascism and fled to Switzerland during the Second World War. During his stay in Switzerland, he wrote *L'Ordine politico della comunità* ("The Political Order of Communities"), laying the foundation of his political movement, established in 1947. In 1946, he started publishing the journal *Comunità* ("Community"), the reference channel of his movement.

5) The Community

Adriano Olivetti's notion of "community" can be read on multiple levels. The first pertains to the territory and to a local government system. The entrepreneur adopted a number of measures to fight the exodus of rural workers, which he saw as a factor of alienation, social impoverishment and uprooting that threatened their connection with land and nature. For instance, in the region of Ivrea, Adriano set up a public transport network that allowed workers to commute back and forth from the workplace. Moreover, the 8000 employees hired for his new factories had to prove that they had been living in the region for at least two years. From 1950 until his death in 1960, he was the president of the *Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica* ("National Institute of Urban Planning"). In 1949, when he was still only the director of the Institute, he resumed and renovated its journal, called *Urbanistica*. Both the institute and the journal were platforms for debates and political ideas, proposals and interventions, particularly in the field of regional urban planning. Persuaded that factories must reach workers where they are, in 1955 Adriano opened a factory in the South of Italy, in Pozzuoli near Naples.

To Adriano, "community" also had a philosophical sense, inspired by Personalism (Denis de Rougemont, Jacques Maritain, Emmanuel Mounier), a current of thought situated between Totalitarianism and Individualism. Adriano believed that industrial labour and assembly lines had changed the world. Workers were at the heart of his vision and philosophy. Workers needed to be protected from any form of alienation. The notion of community, as part of local and decentralised dynamics, was the solution to this problem. He therefore wanted to turn the Italian republic, centralised in Rome, into a federation of about 500 communities. The three poles of this territorial and political reconfiguration were: labour/industry; culture; democracy.

Olivetti did not believe in utopias (which is why Francesco Novara prefers speaking of "heterotopia"), but in theoretical and scientific premises and in relational and organisational plans. His aim was to serve and design a system or order that treated people not only as workers, but in terms of how they related to the world. The community was the system and order where the borders between labour, culture and politics were to be redefined.

"Community", to Adriano, meant the "self-government" of a territory smaller than a province or department and slightly larger than a municipality, with a population of about 100.000-150.000 people. In "self-governed communities", resources are "self-managed" on a local scale without being sent to a central administration. The Canavese area perfectly fitted these criteria. as it encompasses rural, urban and industrial dimensions. Each community would be headed by three representatives of the elected political parties, three representatives of the working class and three public administration experts. The community-based political order imagined by Adriano was based on two main references: 1) the Republic of Venice, and 2) the Swiss constitution. Adrian himself always cultivated the unfulfilled wish to forswear his aristocratic status, in the sense of being "the son of", the company's biological heir, to transfer power to more competent people and to create, in parallel, a legal system that would enable such a transformation.

6) Aesthetics and ethics

Adriano Olivetti claimed to be inspired by an ideal of platonic beauty, and wished for his company to be a synthesis of aesthetics and ethics. The factory and products had to be beautiful, and intellectuals and poets were frequently hired, especially to work for his journals and magazines. They also advised him in his editorial work, or took charge of it. The idea was to connect what is good and what is beautiful. Today, Olivetti's industrial buildings in Ivrea, be they factories, lodgings, schools or social centres, have become an open-air museum that we visited with some of the students and alumni of the HEAD. Haute école d'art et de design de Genève in February 2017. Adriano had wanted these buildings to be well designed, user-friendly and bright, and they are now candidates for inscription on UNESCO's world heritage list. They now belong to history: their case is "closed". They have become the objects of preservation and conservation.

However, what is the connection today between Olivetti's social heterotopia (to use Professor Novara's term), Adriano's emancipatory ambition, and the art school? The latter is currently considered a crucial link in the "creative industry" chain, a means to train a "creative class" that meets the demands of cognitive and post-Fordist, i.e. advanced capitalism. Art schools were traditionally associated with social distinction and privilege, serving the inner workings of specific social classes, their unspoken rules, vocabulary and social habits, to the detriment of others, despite democratisation and free access to education. Through their work, to whom do artists identify the most: entrepreneurs or the working class? By allying industry and ideological concerns about human, climatic, landscape-related, psychological, social or even aesthetic issues, Adriano Olivetti encourages us to adopt a different approach to the art school – an approach that looks beyond profit, class struggle or even a clear, carefully planned and predictable vision of what an artist should be.

Ulivetti tormes et recherche Industry and contemporary culture – an Olivetti historical exhibition (1969–1971)¹ Marcellaturchetti

The itinerant exhibition *Olivetti formes et recherche* (1969-1971) aimed to draw a representative portrait of the Olivetti industry through an original narrative of the means and vocabulary that the company used to communicate – in other words, of the visual aspects that contributed to expressing its unique and specific character or image. It found new ways to showcase Olivetti's research and choices both in its contemporary representations and in future projections. Through the creation of a dynamic relationship with the viewer, the exhibition as a whole was, as underlined by Gae Aulenti, a constructed landscape

1 The present essay was written for the international conference Esposizioni / Exhibitions, organised by CSAC (Centro Studi Archivio della Comunicazione) of the University of Parma, Valserena Abbey, Parma, 27-28 January 2017, whose proceedings are currently being published.

where every single architecture implies a harmony with the overall space, but also where every single architecture develops and builds its characteristic references and weaves its own relations. The connection between the designated spaces is indeed the relationship between them and the overall space, i.e. the relationship between autonomous shapes and the attitudes of the viewer who walks through or toward them, in order to rediscover the shape of the exhibition, which is its own construction.²

The itinerant exhibition travelled to important international venues: Paris, then Barcelona, Madrid, Edinburgh, London and Tokyo, presenting a spectacular yet rigorous account of the Olivetti corporate image policies.

Genesis of the exhibition: the relationship with the Musée des Arts Décoratifs du Louvre and the Parisian context

Paris, October 1969. As the Musée d'Art Moderne inaugurated the sixth Paris Biennale, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs was launching three exhibitions: one about British printmaker Stanley Hayter at the Rivoli gallery; one about the recent work of César in its 20th-century rooms; and, in an aisle entirely renovated by Gae Aulenti, an exhibition about four young Italian artists, presented by the Italian company Olivetti: Mario Ceroli, Jannis Kounellis (born in Greece, living in Rome), Gino Marotta, and Pino Pascali. The exhibition, titled *4 artistes italiens plus que nature*, expressed their common wish to escape the

2 Gae Aulenti archive, file 1.48, photostatic reproduction of typewritten presentation of the project for the Olivetti itinerant exhibition, written for the journal J.O. [Journal Olivetti] no. 16, 1970. traditional canon of plastic art in order to create a space of freedom where they could explore different ways of fully inhabiting space. Their environnements represented the new vocabularies of the Italian artistic avant-garde. The space was designed by Gae Aulenti and was based on an idea of Giorgio Soavi and Renzo Zorzi, directors of cultural relations, industrial design and advertisement at Olivetti. For the exhibition space. Gae Aulenti had the walls curve into the ceiling and floor, creating a continuous surface: the next month, that same space would host the itinerant exhibition Olivetti formes et recherche, in which the rounded walls were preserved yet denied by a display in the darkness.

"Ephemeral works that cannot be sold, stored or transported – maybe only documented, photographed... whose materials, while raw and unsophisticated, are presented in a 'rich', white and streamlined showcase, like a modern machine with a somewhat ironic stance on the rustic aesthetics of Kounellis' heaps of wool, coal or earth [...]."³

The French press also announced the opening of several other exhibitions, among which *Qu'est-ce que le Design?*, which inaugurated the Centre de création industrielle (C.C.I.) and was presented by five designers. This new section of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, dedicated to design, aimed to become an international centre whose venues would illustrate the multiple aspects of industrial production and related architectural problems. The press

3 J. Michel, 'Entre l'art e la vie', *Le Monde*, 16 October 1969, Associazione Archivio Storico Olivetti, file 2310, press review of the international exhibition *Olivetti formes et recherche* at the Louvre in Paris, Fondo Documentazione della Società, Direzione Comunicazione Ufficio also announced another upcoming exhibition about the Italian



company, titled Le style Olivetti: objets publicitaires (14 November -31 December). presumably the exhibition in question with a new title. For that exhibition. the Olivetti company was invited by the Musée des Arts Décoratifs to present the various visual facets of its public image as an internationally recognised instance of a company aware

Exhibition Olivetti formes et recherche at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs du Louvre. The image was also used on the cover of *L'Oeil*, no. 180, December 1969. Photo: Ugo Mulas. © Eredi Ugo Mulas. All rights reserved. Associazione Archivio Storico; Olivetti, Ivrea – Italy of its own authoritative presence on the market and in society, and of its capacity to have an impact on human life.⁴

The Olivetti department of cultural relations, industrial design and advertisement: collaborators

The exhibition at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs remained open from 19 November 1969 to 1 January 1970. It was designed and organised by the Olivetti department of cultural relations, industrial design and advertisement, headed at the time by Renzo Zorzi, and was intended solely as an itinerant exhibition. Giorgio Soavi, in charge of "special initiatives" in the department, collaborated with Gae Aulenti and Hans von Klier for the exhibition coordination, and with

4 The claim that there is an Olivetti "taste", following the expression used by Mario Labò in L'aspetto estetico dell'opera sociale di Adriano Olivetti (Milano 1957), refers to a special form of symbiosis between technical, aesthetic and formal processes that are concretely translated Renzo Zorzi for its conceptual design.

Gae Aulenti's

design imagined a different geometric volume for the boxes of each thematic section. Hired by Giorgio Soavi, the architect from Friuli worked on the project for less than a year, and the actual set-up took less than twenty days. In her notes, Gae Aulenti describes as follows her experience with Olivetti:

"Years of highly tense experience for the chance of working with Giorgio Soavi and Renzo Zorzi, the two brilliant minds in charge of the Olivetti image in the golden age of the company, the ones who triggered the passions and encounters with other designers, architects and graphic artists, cultivating our differences toward a unitary vision of the Olivetti company."⁵

The modules' internal graphic design was entrusted to Giorgio Colombo, "borrowed" from the Studio of Ettore Sottsass Jr. along with other designers, and later hired by Olivetti for the next stops of the exhibition in Spain and the UK. Colombo did not go to the last exhibition in Japan, choosing instead to open his own photography studio and to work as a full-time photographer. Other special collaborators included Mario Bellini, Rodolfo Bonetto, Ettore Sottsass Jr. and many other artists.

In the Olivetti organisational chart of 1969, Sottsass appeared as head of the studio for system and furniture design, but his collaboration with the company actually started in the mid-1950s, when their independent working relationship ensured the creative freedom and autonomy of Sottsass' studio in via Manzoni, at the time one of the most interesting and pioneering

5 Archivio Gae Aulenti, file 5.289, typewritten copy of a fax sent to Giorgio Soavi, 24-10-2000. centres of design research. Sottsass 19 designed the exhibition poster – also featured on the catalogue cover and on the invitation card – with Clino Trini Castelli and Roberto Pieraccini, the audiovisual system *Juke Box* with Hans von Klier, various gift items and products – such as the portable typewriter Valentine –, as well as videos featuring various sections of the exhibition, shot in collaboration with his friend Giorgio Soavi.

Soavi had joined Adriano Olivetti's company together with Egidio Bonfante, before marrying Adriano's second-born, Lidia Olivetti. A writer and designer, he initially worked for the magazine Comunità and the publishing house Edizioni di Comunità. From 1956, he was promoted head of the Olivetti research and advertisement office and, after that, of the special projects office. At the time of the exhibition, Soavi worked on cultural initiatives and on the planning and production of illustrated books, lithographs, sculptures and promotion gifts for customers, suppliers, and partners. He promoted outstanding initiatives involving collaborations with numerous great contemporary artists (Alechinsky, Botero, Butor, Folon, Giacometti, Munari, Sutherland, and many others), thereby consolidating the image of a culturally and artistically aware company.

Before graduating in architecture in 1954, Gae Aulenti worked for Olivetti on the layout of the magazine *Tecnica e Organizzazione*. Later Soavi invited her to work on Olivetti's two famous showrooms: in 1967, she entirely renovated the one previously designed by Albini-Helg in Rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré, right in the centre of Paris; and in 1968, she worked on the Olivetti showroom in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Gae Aulenti also wrote an article 20 on Olivetti for the issue n. 4/5 of *Prisme International* (a newly-born French magazine on graphic design and visual communication, directed by Bernard Petitjean), published in January 1969. In her article, titled '*Olivetti, sa publicité dans le monde*', Gae Aulenti traced the complex, coordinated and outstanding history of Olivetti advertisement from the 1930s onwards. The company's global image was the result of a series of carefully planned choices and of the awareness of bringing a cultural and civic contribution before being an instrument of persuasion.

The Paris edition of the exhibition

The various stages of the exhibition were documented by important photographers (Ugo Mulas, Alberto Fioravanti, Giorgio Colombo, Tim Street-Porter, and others) and by additional information dispositives: a film directed by Philippe Charliat with a commentary by Riccardo Felicioli takes us on a journey through a dark and mysterious city, guided by Gae Aulenti to the discovery of the many possible Olivetti "worlds"; as for the catalogue, with texts by Giovanni Giudici, it actually is an anti-catalogue, if we take the term in its traditional sense, and provides a key to interpret the language and composition underpinning the exhibition project.

The exhibition poster designed by Ettore Sottsass Jr. is a composition of coloured traces against a black background, outlining a Vitruvian Man, meticulously measured in relation to his parts, possible movements and hence capacity to generate other forms in a changing system of reference.

After the Paris edition (19 November 1969 – 1 January 1970), the exhibition travelled to five additional venues: under the title Investigation y Diseño, it was presented at the Pabellon Italiano de la Feria de Muestras in Barcelona (18 February – 6 March 1970), where Alberto Fioravanti and Giorgio Colombo did the photo shoot; it then moved to the Palacio de Cristal in Madrid, in an abandoned industrial area where the closed exhibition space was built (21 August – 12 September 1970); inside a large inflatable balloon for the London exhibition on the Euston Station Plaza (20 October – 22 November 1970); and, between October and November 1971, it was presented in Tokyo, also in an inflatable structure on the square in front of the Prince Hotel.

There are many different Olivetti "worlds". Each world, each "topic" has been isolated, collected, and concentrated into a different "autonomous" volume - some large, with (geometrically and symbolically) elementary shapes, ranging from cubes to pyramids and labyrinths to outline an everchanging "landscape" of combinations among volumes. The large geometrical shapes of these "solids", sometimes diagonally cut, lend themselves to articulated and complex compositions. And the relationships among the volumes are not the only thing that changes: so does the relationship between the volumes themselves and the surrounding environment: dark in Barcelona, brightly illuminated in the Palacio de Cristal in Madrid, and translucent in the huge London "balloon".6

The various sections (in Paris, the eighteen environments were emblematically titled architecture, participation, images, pop,

6 G. Aulenti, 'Una mostra itinerante', Domus, no. 493, 1970, pp. 38-42.

editions, communication,

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design, writings, morphology, automation. environnements, software, etc....) were concrete illustrations of the relationship between the industry and its public manifestations, each considered as an autonomous reality with its own values, as opposed to the traditional idea of corporate image where the means of communication are subordinated to the needs of the industry. Small-scale models and architectural drawings, slideshows and photographs of factories, documentation of exhibitions of high cultural value such as the Gianni Mattioli collection of modern painting or the collection of frescoes salvaged from the flood of Florence, posters, calendars, gift items, products, slogans, films, books, lithographs and devices, are distributed on an itinerary of changing environments across an overall surface of 900 m². The intent was to allow the visitor to experience the Olivetti world through a highly expressive and spectacular composition. The *mise en scène* deliberately denied its own container to emphasise a participatory process of exploration and discovery of a space devoted to the acquisition of factual and critical knowledge.

Gae Aulenti achieved a particularly striking display effect by having the various sections stand out against a dimensionless background constituted by a continuous dark surface covering the floors, walls, and ceilings of the rooms. Slideshows and film projections make the various topics come to life alongside singularly striking set-ups, such as the heap of 40 portable typewriters Valentine – known for their bright red colour – or a rotating large white machine "head" that redirects the viewer's attention from the



Exhibition Olivetti Concept and Form, London, Euston Station Plaza, 1970. Photo: © Giorgio Colombo, Milano; Associazione Archivio Storico Olivetti, Ivrea – Italy weight of the mass to the rigour of the lines, and a suite of office typewriters seen through a screen that takes us to the discovery of the modular value of their design.⁷

Conclusions

Olivetti formes et recherche marked a watershed in the narrative of the Olivetti company, after more than a decade of exhibitions about the company. The first show, organised at MoMA in 1952 and titled Olivetti: design in industry, was conceived by Leo Lionni in collaboration with the Museum's department of architecture and design. Olivetti was depicted as a leading company in the field of European design, not only in terms of aesthetic quality, but also for its unmatched "high standard of taste" in the planning of all the visual aspects of the company.

7 'Olivetti al Louvre', *Notizie Olivetti*, no.7, 1969, p.1.

This initial and important



American statement was followed by other exhibitions about the company, starting from the rather more famous itinerant exhibition *Stile Olivetti*, which opened in Zurich in 1961 and presented in Nairobi in 1966. The roots, however, run deeper, and are associated with important promotional publications such as 25 anni di Olivetti (1933) and Olivetti di Ivrea. Visita a una fabbrica (1949).

The invitation to the exhibition *Concept* and *Form* presented it through some its emblematic phases: "this is an unusual exhibition – a mirror held up to life [...] by industry [...]. More than just an industry [...] society [...] and the world that industry shares with society".

Olivetti formes et recherche was a turning point compared to the choices and language of the latter exhibition, as anticipated by the conference previously organised in October 1968 by Olivetti at the Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnica in Milan for the hundredth anniversary of the birth of founder Camillo Olivetti. This 4-day event, titled Linguaggi nella società e nella tecnica, was densely packed with talks and lectures on the study of language as social representation and as a measure and motor of innovation. The main topics of the conference included: social analysis through linguistic analysis; the physiology of languages (from the language of humans to that of electronic and IT devices); the innovatory power of language through the study of machine and automated languages that introduce new forms of dialogue between human and machines. And, finally, the culture's capacity to orient technique and industry. The many outstanding lecturers included Emile

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Museum of Modern Art (The) 1952, *Olivetti: Design in Industry*, Vol. 20, no. 1, The Museum of Modern Art Bullettin, New York.

Vinti, C 2007, Gli anni dello stile industriale 1948-1965. Immagine e politica culturale nella grande impresa italiana, Marsilio, Venice. Benveniste, Roman Jakobson, Giacomo Devoto, Umberto Eco, Dana Scott, Sebastian K. Saumjan, Helmut Schnelle, Alan J. Perlis, Arne Naess, Marvin Minsky, Seymour A. Papert, and Lucien Goldman. *Olivetti formes et recherche* clearly represented a public, popular and certainly impressive translation into contemporary techniques and languages of the latest artistic, linguistic, technological and sociological research. A way to turn the page of the social and territorial dimension of the Olivetti style of the 1950s and of Adriano's time.

Layout: 2°3'36" Corrections: 29'27"



A chiare lettere / Spelled out. Renato Guttuso's *Boogie Woogie* at the Olivetti



The Olivetti archives in Ivrea preserve a letter type-written in 1979 by engineer Bruno Piazza to writer Renzo Zorzi, then head of cultural relations at Olivetti.1 In his note. Piazza deplored the "uniustified" presence of the "mural painting" Boogie Woogie by the artist Gottuso [sic] in the refectory of the Olivetti factory in Scarmagno, some twenty kilometres away from lyrea.² The memo enumerated the risks to which the monumental fresco was potentially exposed. Piazza regretted the dysfunctional position of the fresco next to the storage room and its general state of neglect: "I suggest that you [Zorzi] consider relocating the painting in a more meaningful place (obviously outside of Scarmagno)".3 The peremptory nature of Piazza's "obviously" betrayed his perception of a discordance between artist Renato Guttuso's work and the industrial context of Scarmagno.

The letter did not explain whether this judgment expressed Piazza's taste or a feeling shared by other Olivetti employees. The fact that, in 1979, the fresco and its position could be considered meaningless certainly had to do with the suspension of historical and spatial site-specificity of the work, which had been created in 1946 for the Olivetti showroom in Via del Tritone in Rome and re-contextualised in a factory.

A post-war tribute to the popular dances of the working class, Guttuso's *Boogie Woogie* represented the first incursion of socialist realism into the rationalist architecture designed by Ugo Sissa in 1943. With a surface of 8×8 m, the monumental painting was articulated on two of the three levels of the store, like a lateral spine. A metal and stone staircase ran across the mass of moving bodies, connecting the underground storeroom to the exhibition gallery open

1 Ivrea, Archivio Storico Olivetti (ASO), Bruno Piazza, Letter to Renato Zorzi "Quadro murale di Gottuso in Scarmagno", 24 August 1979.

- 2 Ibid. 3 Ibid.
 -

on the street, while the mezzanine was devoted to typing classes. Seen from outside, the base of the fresco looked like a collage of dancing gestures, framed by a network of cubic modules supporting a series of Studio 42 typewriters. The street sounds, combined with the clicking of the machines during typing classes, contributed to materialising what the theoretician Manfredo Tafuri called the "architectural surrealism" of the Olivetti store.⁴ The point, wrote Tafuri, was to erase the showroom's "commercial character" in favour of a principle of "functional beauty" that also shaped all of Olivetti's factories.5

After almost twenty years in Rome, some time in 1967, Boogie Woogie was moved by truck to Scarmagno, in Northern Piedmont. The decision emerged in the aftermath of the fire and subsequent closing of the store in Via del Tritone and the related need to find a suitably large space to accommodate the artwork. The decision complied with the 1960s tendency to put monumental art in relationship with factories - a relationship epitomised by the collaboration between the steel plants Italsider and the 1962 open-air exhibition Sculture nella città in Spoleto.⁶ Furthermore, placing the mural painting inside a factory refectory also respected Olivetti's tried-and-tested Kunst

4 S. Campus, "Architetti e artisti per l'industrial design. Lo show-room Olivetti a New York". *ArcheoArte*, no. 1, p. 749.

6 Curated by art historian Giovanni Carandente, the project included a partnership with the Italsider steel factories for a series of ten production artistic residencies in various industrial facilities. Among artists included in the project, Ettore Colla produced his sculptures in Bagnoli; David Smith in the dismissed premises of the Voltri factory; Lynn Chadwick, Nino Franchina and Eugenio Carmi in Cornegliano; Arnaldo Pomodoro in Lovere; Pietro Consagra in Savona, where the workers also produced Alexander Calder's contribution.

ASO, Notizie di fabbrica, Year VIII, no. 4, April 1967, p. 7.
 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 "Commessa 60124 a Cornegliano". *Civiltà delle macchine*, 1959, no. 5, pp. 50-51.

- 11 ASO, Gatto, "Guttuso in mensa". *Il Tasto*, no. 8,
- 27 April 1967. 12 Ibid.
- 13 Archivio Cleto Cossavella, Lotta di classe, 1964-1968.
- 14 Gatto, "Guttuso in mensa", cit.
- 15 Ibid.



am Bau philosophy. As in the case of Costantino Nivola's wall of the New York showroom in 1954, the Olivetti practice of public art interventions especially concerned social buildings and adhered to their transdisciplinary vision of arts as "applied human sciences".

On the subject of the fresco in Scarmagno, we read in a 1967 issue of Notizie di fabbrica that some were prone to consider the "social environment" of an industrial refectory as perfectly suited to host this "historical document", featuring "a mass of men and women, bursting with colours, movements, and life".7 Guttuso himself was in favour of this relocation, and considered his work as compatible with an industrial setting because of the production and labour modes adopted in the enterprise. Indeed, at the time when Adriano Olivetti commissioned the piece, Guttuso and Olivetti discussed in detail the price and planning of the pictorial work. This was essential for an artist who, in 1940, had joined the Italian Communist Party: "We didn't think about our work as a commercial object. Working with no interferences was our goal. We were not selling our paintings, and the idea of a mural was exciting".8

The "us" implied by Guttuso encompassed a generation of artists who had been active in post-war resistance movements and the related political debates. The artist offered to be paid as a specialised worker, "plus expenses and support": "we set no deadline, and I strenuously worked my regular 8 hours a day for 25 days".9 The "support" was provided, among others, by artist Nino Franchina, author of Commessa 60124 (1954), an iron obelisk temporarily erected on Genoa's seafront. In the issue n. 5 of Civiltà delle macchine – an Italsider cultural magazine founded in 1953 by the poet Leonardo Sinisgalli – the abstract shape of Franchina's sculpture was described as the encounter between the

fine arts and industrial production, starting from the reclamation of the "former Ilva ingot factory" and of the "Dalmine pipes".¹⁰ The sculpture, continued the article, was the fruit of an intense collaboration between the artist and the Italsider workers in the Cornegliano factory. Differently, Guttuso's *Boogie Woogie* did not emanate from cooperation with the Olivetti workforce but was rather a "tribute" to them, and an unexpected gift sent to Scarmagno in 1967 without any previous consultation.

The working gloves and the fresco

The Boogie Woogie fresco was mentioned again in an opinion piece titled "Guttuso in mensa" (Guttuso in the refectory) published in a 1967 issue of another factory journal, II Tasto.11 Starting on a polemical note, the article enumerated a series of current events: "River banks, if one can call them so, are collapsing; Italian cities are being flooded; speculators are plundering Agrigento; the centre-left government is making cuts in the already meagre salaries of our workers; the dirty Vietnam war is raging on; and what does Olivetti do?".12 The question "what to do", "what is to be done?", which Lenin borrowed in 1902 from a 19th-century social novel by Nikolay Chernyshevsky, bounched from the worker's protests to art labour between 1967 and 1968. It resurfaced in Mario Merz's work and in the framework of the Arte povera movement, whose manifesto evoked, in its formulation, the idea of art as an active guerrilla practice. In Ivrea, the question was far from rhetorical, in the speculative light of the 1969 workers' struggles of the so-called "autunno caldo" (hot autumn). In 1965, a group of Olivetti workers seceded from the trade union and founded the journal Lotta di classe, active until 1973.13 In November 1969, the factory worker Mario Rossi, one of the founders of Gruppo

XXII ottobre, guit Ivrea to return to Genoa and take part in the beginnings of the armed struggle. In this context, the relocation of Guttuso's fresco touched a raw nerve, that *II Tasto* condensed in its vision of the Olivetti cultural policies as arbitrary philanthropy: "(The Olivetti) decided to introduce Guttuso to the ignorant Scarmagno workers by means of one of his large canvasses, placed on the back wall of the refectory, as if in a baptistery".14 Following one of the topoi of cultural reflection in times of crisis. // Tasto calculated the expenses for moving the fresco from Rome to Scarmagno - "about one million lire" - and compared them to the workers' unmet demands, due to austerity measures: "Just think of the workers who are denied even security gloves because the company, striving as it is toward maximum economy policies [sic], cannot sustain any further wasteful expenses [...]".15 The contrast between the paternalistic move and the controversial expectations on the social function of art echoed with some contemporary debates of the time. One relevant statement emerged in 1961 around Michelangelo Antonioni's La Notte (1961) and the character of the industrialist Gherardi. Significantly located in the industrial Northern Italy, the magnate Gherardi invites the writer Pontano to "rejuvenate" his company and to establish, through his writing talent, an effective "communication between bosses and workers", as an antidote to the demands raised in the protests. Antonioni's stereotype of the industrialist-patron resonates in the closing of the article in II Tasto, which ends with a close-up on a group of philanthropists "with their noses up in the air, engrossed in lively discussion or debates, as if they were famous critics, about contemporary art and its masters".16 Again evidence, imply the workers, of the disconnection between art and the grounded reality of labour.

Art and workers

In 1976 Renato Zorzi commented on the two-faced social and cultural utopias developed in company towns such as Ivrea. "At a time when utopias can become true", wrote Zorzi, "the problem resides precisely here: in preventing them from actually becoming true".17 Despite pointing at the critical gap between experimentation and implementation, Zorzi held on to Olivetti's notion of utopia as "applied research" with a focus on the process rather than on the result. When extended to the factory, this notion translated into the image of an industrial site that did not necessarily produce art, but could produce in an artistic mode. The trend was often described through aesthetic and social oxymora such as "humanised assembly line" and "concrete utopia".

Inaugurated in 1964, the factories of Scarmagno were articulated into a modular structure of buildings, separated from the village by a highway. Whereas the industrial site in Ivrea was integrated into the city like a "citadel", Scarmagno returned to the model of a "daylight" factory detached from the urban fabric. What changed was not only the notion of architecture but Adriano Olivetti's very notion of the factory as a cultural project that had led to the commission of Guttuso's fresco. Furthermore, the symbolic value of the commission of *Boogie Woogie* derived from the fact

20 Ibid. 21 Ibid.

23 R. Guttuso, "Arte e operai", cit.

24 Ibid.

that it was the only artistic assignment "autonomously" decided by Adriano Olivetti.¹⁸ Therefore, moving *Boogie Woogie* to Scarmagno in 1967 was more than an aesthetic and social choice, but the sign of a radical change in the working, political, industrial and cultural environment.

In June 1967, Il Tasto published a letter of the "comrade" and painter Renato Guttuso.¹⁹ Guttuso's piece "Arte e operai" (Art and workers) was prompted by the "substantial and inexplicable" hostility that the artist received from workers to whom he felt connected "by ideological convictions and thirty years of faithful revolutionary activism".²⁰ In his article, Guttuso evoked the contract and the salary agreed upon with Adriano Olivetti to explain the fresco's intentions: "It was and is - intended as the simple narrative of a worker's festivity, and certainly not as a celebration of neo-capitalism or technological development associated with the capitalist structure [...]. The fact that a painting of such explicit popular inspiration was saved and moved to a company refectory instead of being destroyed, I believe, can hardly be held against Olivetti".²¹ Thus, whereas in the workers' perception the Olivetti leadership considered their factories as "artworks", similarly to Antonioni' Gherardi, Guttuso brought the debate back to the question of his own artist's labour. This way, the role of the commissioner was redefined in the basic terms of salary, social responsibility and work opportunity.

The partial ambiguity of Olivetti's concrete utopias lied in their striking resemblance to known forms of patronage. However, as poet and Olivetti employee Geno Pampaloni pointed out, the vision for culture there elaborated was based on the plan for a future society and the parallel need for "an organic intellectual" to sustain this political and poetic project.²² Though adopting Gramsci's

¹⁶ Gatto, "Guttuso in mensa", cit.

¹⁷ R. Zorzi, "Olivetti: continuità e innovazione". *L'architettura, cronache e storia*, no. 249, 1976, p. 133.

¹⁸ The hypothesis is supported by Zorzi in 2002. See ASO, Paolo Vagheggi, "Mafai, Guttuso e Carrà. Artisti in casa Olivetti". *La Repubblica*, 22 November 2002.

¹⁹ R. Guttuso, "Arte e operai". *II Tasto*, no. 12, Year XIV, 28 June 1967.

G. Pampaloni, "Architettura e urbanistica alla Olivetti".
 Poesia, politica e fiori. Scritti su Adriano Olivetti. Edizioni di Comunità. Roma, 2016, p. 72.

terminology, Pampaloni consciously put the notion of "organic intellectual" between quotation marks, following Olivetti's intention to position his program beyond the Cold War binary opposition of capitalism and socialism. The goal was indeed the creation of a third social and political space, where art would contribute to the articulation of meaning. A meaning that, suggests Guttuso in his letter to the Olivetti workers, was probably to be found in the function that the artist attributed to his work, since "the function of art, even in a modest piece such as mine, is always indirect, art being 'consumed' not only by the commissioner but by everyone; especially by the recipients of the artist's inspiration".23 On the subject of the costs of the painting, Guttuso pointed out that the fresco did not cost 80 million, as suggested by another factory journal published by the CISL union, but 80.000 lire.²⁴ Nonetheless, he concluded, the workers should be getting the gloves that they demanded, and they could count on his support for this.

II Tasto accepted Guttuso's point that art was not only addressed to the commissioner. However, states the editorial committee, "in the present social conditions, even in the most advanced companies such as Olivetti, the possibility (for the workers) to enjoy artistic expression is quite limited [...], as society gives them neither the training nor the material conditions to enjoy it". In this context, argued the workers, often "against the artist's will, the cultural value vanishes, and the only thing that is left is the external advertisement value".²⁵

We do not know whether Guttuso joined the struggle for an art that was not "for the workers", but "a weapon in their fight", as hoped for in the last lines of *II Tasto*. Their wish somehow aligned with Adriano Olivetti's view of an industrial project which tools were a publishing house and the practice of the artists involved in the production. Without dwelling on a reflection on the pre- and post- Adriano Olivetti era, it is nonetheless possible to examine the actual survival of his utopias after the 1960s, particularly those regarding industrial culture. In hindsight, the hypothesis that the experimental stage of Olivetti's cultural policies may have lost its sheen emerges from a letter written in 1985 by Olivettiman Giorgio Soavi to art historian Giulio Carlo Argan. In the letter, Soavi declines to financially support the production of prints by artists associated with kinetic art and Arte programmata (Programmed art), whose visibility had been promoted in 1960s Italy by the joint efforts of Olivetti, Bruno Munari, and Umberto Eco. "Dear Argan, writes Soavi, your letter reminds me of countless and certainly pleasant initiatives to which we all took part with great enthusiasm. I am thinking for instance of the series of exhibitions of Programmed art [...], but at the time, [I was] thrilled about the objects and about those kids who were then at the beginning of their career. A career which, if I am not mistaken, culminated with (Julio) Le Parc being awarded at the Venice Biennale. I remember those initiatives guite well. But if I must tell you the truth, as I intend to do, I believe that those inventions, those contraptions as they were called, in other words, that kind of programmed art have done their time: or maybe I'm the one who's changed. I must confess that I increasingly look for and prefer an artist who knows how to draw a tree or a face".26

After Scarmagno, the fragmentary accounts on the subsequent displacements of Guttuso's *Boogie Woogie* fresco report its presence in the former "officine H" in Ivrea, in what is today a multi-purpose cultural centre. Eventually, since 2001, the fresco has been implicitly included in the itinerary of the open-air museum of Olivetti's architectures. Today, its outline can be discerned through the window of one of the study rooms of the BA in nursing studies, relocated since 2008 in the former ICO buildings of Ivrea. The fresco can be seen frontally on the wall of the bar of the multi-purpose room, in a background position analogous to the one it had in the Scarmagno refectory and the Olivetti showroom in Via del Tritone.

ASO, Giorgio Soavi, Letter to Giulio Carlo Argan, 22 June 1985.



Layout: 57'31" Corrections: 31'25"







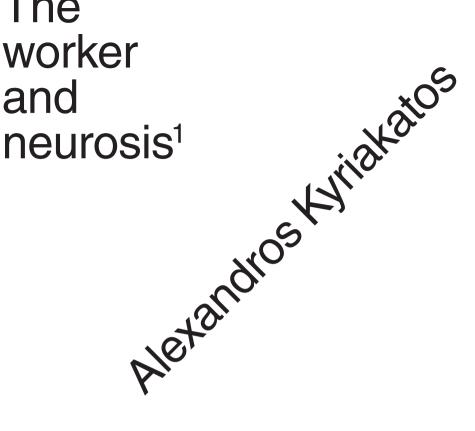












Since the beginning of the 20th century, the geographical area of the city of Sierre and Chippis has been largely defined by the aluminium industry. During my art studies, I had classes in the industrial zone between the two cities. My atelier was also located there, in an area that is in transition as the industries are shrinking. The

The article of Giovanni Jervis "Condizione operaia e nevrosi" was published in 1973 in Inchiesta (ed. Dedalo, Bari) in the issues of April-June 1973. Bernadette Gromer translated it in French as Condition ouvrière et névrose and it appeared in the Théorie et Politique in the issue 5, July 1975 and issue 6, March 1976. The Greek version of Jervis' work is a translation from the French version by Maria Tsoskounoglou for the editions Stochastis. Athens in 1978. The title in the Greek edition is Giovanni Jervis "Ergatis ke nevrosi", which translates as the worker and neurosis. To my knowledge there is no English version of this work of Giovanni Jervis. It should be mentioned that εργάτης (ergatis, here in its masculine clause), is rooted in the word έργον (ergon) and in modern Greek is used to describe the one that struggles by giving his labour in return for payment, it is frequently used to describe the industrial worker. In the present article, I use the term industrial worker and worker interchangeably. The present article is based and adapted on the aforementioned Greek edition, translations to English are made by the author.

transformation of space and of the local public spheres due to the industrialisation of the region highly concerned me at that time and influenced my artistic practice. The archives from the city and the factory, as well as the maps of the area, offered a valuable account of the historical sociopolitical changes that occurred in the region. For several months I would walk from the atelier to the city of Chippis and the factory which was the site of the first year's intervention projects. The building that is presently hosting the ateliers, used to be the metal construction enterprise Movimax Métal SA. This "non-idyllic space" triggered thoughts about creativity, the ownership of the means of artistic production and the controversial question of the exceptionality of the artist as a worker.



Movimax 1980

Movimax 2015

Walking from the studio in the industrial zone of Sierre to the factory in Chippis mechanical, artistic, monotonous and creative rhythms coexist, overlap and redefine their borders. The crisis of the Fordist industry gave rise to a new form of capitalism that promoted flexibility and creativity as an answer to the regulated social relations of the welfare state and the rejection of the assembly line by the workers². However, "the era of Fordist, industrial production was all but destroyed and the mass worker was replaced by the 'socialised worker' bringing into being a new epoch in which the factory is increasingly disseminated out into society as a whole"3.

In 1973 the Italian psychiatrist Giovanni Jervis's text "Condizione operaia e nevrosi" analysed the intricate and explicit relationship between work in the factory and neurosis. Neurosis⁴ is the condition that arose from work in the capitalistic factory as workers were increasingly becoming absorbed in the production process, not only physically but also mentally⁵. The article states that neurosis was a very common condition among factory workers who were primarily monitored by social security doctors⁶ The majority of these doctors, the "psychiatry of the capital"7 as Jervis refers to them, viewed neurosis as a medical, physiological and personalised condition. Jervis proposed that the struggle for health in the factory, a cornerstone of the workers' movement at that time. targeted not only the factory but also this dominant medical ideology⁸. The "psychiatry of the capital" maintained and perpetuated an image of the neurotic worker as a passive machine affected by the factory conditions⁹. Jervis sees neurosis as a manifestation of the workers' resentment of the factory¹⁰. Neurosis remains, however, an internalised protest against work, a latent realisation of the discrepancies in the life of the worker and the negative influence of the factory¹¹. For Jervis "the problem of the worker's neurosis is not something separate, individualised or isolated. It is an

4 Neurosis as a psychiatric condition was removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) III, it remains though central in psychoanalytic approaches to psychopathology i.e. Bergeret, J. (2012). Psychologie pathologique. Issy-les-Moulineaux: Elsevier Masson. Jervis, 1978.

8 Ihid

10 Ibid., see also footnotes 27 and 30.

11 Ibid. ingredient of a general political problem. For this reason, the overcoming of neurosis would be achieved through the realisation and refutation of its personalised character: that is through social struggles and 43

Revnolds, 1989. 2

³ Gill and Pratt, 2008, p. 10.

⁵ 6 Ibid

⁷ Ibid., p. 15

⁹ Ibid.

political action."12

Jervis pointed out that neurosis stems not only from the conditions of the Fordist factory, but also from the contradictions by with which capital reproduction organises the human life¹³. One can suggest that as life is increasingly absorbed by labour, neurosis becomes a generalised social condition. Far from being emancipatory, post-Fordist capitalism made creativity the condition of precarious labour¹⁴, and perhaps the source of contemporary neurosis is to be found in that relationship. If art can resist the appropriation of creativity, then we are one step closer to overcome the contemporary neurosis within the *social factory*.

The preface of the Greek version of Jervis' "Condizione operaia e nevrosi" (Worker and Neurosis) contextualises the connection of his reflection with the seminal opening up of the asylum in Gorizia in Northern Italy: the material product of a new conception of psychiatry beyond its traditional limits, open towards society¹⁵. We read that since 1962, Jervis participated with Franco Basaglia and other psychiatrists in the process of transforming the Gorizia asylum into an open self-managed therapeutic community¹⁶. The community operated through general assemblies organised collectively by the patients and doctors, as well as issuing the patient-run newspaper II Picchio¹⁷. The opening of Gorizia became a landmark

12 Quotation from Giovanni Jervis in the cover of the Greek edition.

- 14 Paolo Virno interviewed by Pascal Gielen and Sonja Lavern, 2009.
- 15 Tsoskounoglou, 1978
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.

18 More information can be found in Foot, J. (2014). Franco Basaglia and the radical psychiatry movement in Italy, 1961–78. *Critical and Radical Social Work,* 2(2), pp.235-249. for the psychiatric revolution in Italy whose cornerstone is the Basaglia law 180¹⁸.

Furthermore, *Worker* and Neurosis results from Giovanni Jervis' commitment

¹³ Jervis, 1978.

in the city of Reggio Emilia, as a director of the local counselling centre in the 1970s¹⁹. There his work was developed along with that of a team composed of health care specialists, practitioners and members of the local community²⁰. At the time, psychiatry was making a decisive step out of the asylum and towards society through the organisation of collective discussions and assemblies of experts and local inhabitants²¹. Indeed, the team aimed to expand the "problem of madness beyond the hermetic quality of the asylum, and the tight or neutral limits of specialisation in order to become part of the social reality, the political issues and the everyday life"²².

This endeavour marked by the 1968 events, was key in establishing a vital bond between the struggle and the everyday life of the citizens in the relevant context of home, neighbourhood and work²³.

The introduction of the *Worker and Neurosis* brings the reader directly into the core of the author's thesis: that there is a relationship between the various overt and covert clinical symptoms of neurosis and the condition of the worker. Jervis writes:

"The aim of this article is to shed light onto certain problems and to develop a hypothesis on the subject of 'neurotic disturbances' of the industrial worker. By neurosis, we refer to a group of 'clinical symptoms' and

20 Ibid., Further information on the practical organisation of the experiment in Reggio Emilia, its contextualisation, the working groups and their intervention to the local community, as well as the role of the community administration and the Communist Party of Italy can be found in Donnelly, M. (1992). The politics of mental health in Italy. London: Tavistock/ Routledge, pp. 47–48.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., p. 8.

23 Ibid.

also the more general problem that of dysphoria and of the psychological contradictions that emerge from the very conditions of the worker. The clinical symptoms that refer to neurosis 45

¹⁹ Tsoskounoglou, 1978.

are mental disturbances with certain characteristics. It is necessary to sketch how they usually appear and to stress their direct relation to the medical practice"²⁴.

According to Jervis the general source of neurosis lies in the "contradiction between suppressing and emancipatory desires, between acceptance and the tendency for negation"²⁵. He claims that neurosis is part of the social reality and stems from its very contradictions; it is a consequence of the division of labour, class segregation and the discontent of the bourgeois society²⁶. However, it is important to note that Jervis avoids drawing a deterministic line between neurosis and the contradictions of the organisation of the bourgeois society.

Jervis describes the working conditions with regard to the highly rationalised production process as follows:

"[...] what the worker spends during work (that is what the capital steals from him in the form of productivity), does not only concern the yield of a 'mechanical' work, the standard physical exhaustion or mental absorption [...] but the total effort that the worker invests while performing an unbearable operation. At work, he not only deposits his practical intellectual and muscular force and his concentration, but his entire being, in an effort that demands his personality and his psychosocial equilibrium. Therefore, the capitalistic factory in order to be profitable sponges off the personality of the worker, incorporating him further into the mechanism of production"²⁷.

Jervis notes that the discrepancy between the

24 Jervis, 1978, p. 13.

25 Ibid., p. 20–21. 26 Ibid. *impossibility* and the *necessity* to keep up with work in the

factory is central to the worker's life²⁸. In fact, "the worker's neurosis is born from that clash -it is actually that very clash- and is aggravated to the extent that the worker does not manage to integrate his personal negation to a collective scheme of resistance, that is to express his personal discomfort through proper, rational and political means"29.

He describes that the capitalistic factory is a full frontal attack on the worker, and that this offensive is absolute and therefore cannot be alleviated by a more human factory; the workers' resentment towards the factory is a readout of the contradictions of the capitalistic production³⁰. Jervis seems to target the role of Capital in organising production rather than a critique to Taylorism. It is therefore tempting to speculate that within the conditions of capitalistic production, a reform with terms more caring of the worker, like those proposed by Olivetti, cannot be a solution. The workers' "aversion" of the factory was the decisive factor in bringing about the transformations of the factory.³¹

Jervis supports that there is a high affinity between neurosis and the dominant medical ideology and practice, which is to build up dependencies and hierarchies in the patient/doctor relationship³². On that note, he argues that the medicalisation of stress through chemical treatments, medical tests and hospitalisations, internalises the problem by promoting the idea of a

27 lbid., p. 39.

28 Ibid., With respect to the life in the factory, Jervis refers to studies of Adriano Voltonin suggesting that absenteeism is a self-defence against the dangers that intense work poses to the health of the workers.

- 29 Ibid., p. 42.
- 30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., The resistance of workers to the assembly line factory was decisive for the crisis of Fordism is also discussed by Aglietta in Reynolds,

C. (1989) From Ford to Computers. Worker's Liberty, 11, pp. 46-48.

defective organism³³. For Jervis the massive prescriptions of tranquillisers, euphoric pills, vitamins etc., constructs and perpetuates a passive type of patient alienation regarding the

social causes of their problems³⁴.

In this respect, Jervis frequently repeats that the interpretations and therapeutic practices of the medicine of the capital become an obstacle to the realisation of those political problems that make neurosis a highly prevalent condition among workers and that they further contribute to the passivity and fragmentation of the movement. While the role of the psychiatrist remains important, according to Jervis, the "charismatic role of psychiatry" needs to be deconstructed, so that the problem overcomes its "technical" and "individualised limits"³⁵. He further stresses the importance of "decolonising" the ideology of the working class from the medical ideology, and that the defence of health cannot be left to "experts" nor to "services of the state"³⁶. This is a crucial remark that highlights the importance of autonomy to counter the hegemony of the medicine of the capital.

According to Jervis, workers need to refute the dominant medical practice and ideology, strengthen social relations and organise in political subjects; it is essential to build up tackling strategies in and out of the factory³⁷. He stresses the importance of rigorous

- 35 Ibid., p. 49
- 36 Ibid., pp. 49–5037 Ibid.

collective discussions, and exchanges of opinions with other workers that have or had neurotic problems³⁸. It is important, he further notes, to share the experience as a common problem and a common condition without neglecting as to how the condition is seen by each

³² There is a relation between therapy and the symptoms of a medical illness in the sense that the latter is constructed through the definition and selection of a set of symptoms. This ordering of symptoms appears to be compatible with the therapy that is chosen in order to cope with those symptoms. The therapy/ illness is a product of the medical ideology and appears as a way of managing the patient. [see Franco Basaglia oi thesmoi tis vias kai alla keimena (2008) Athina: Vivliotechnia, pp. 107-115]. In his article, the "Myth of Anti-psychiatry" Jervis discusses that according to the "bourgeois ideology" mental health is synonymous to the affirmation of the "dominant reasoning"; madness is therefore seen as a non-conformity with respect to this bourgeois criterion [see Jervis (1978), pp. 119-120].

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

individual as to prepare a collective coping strategy³⁹.

The opening up of the asylum and the transformation of solitary wards into a social space produced a new geography, that of inclusion. Collective discussions of the problematics and the experience of the internment paved the way for social solutions to the psychiatric problems. Breaking down the asylum walls was a major break through to a new conception of the psychiatric illness, its causes and treatments. Specifically, neurotic problems are contextualised with respect to the capitalistic relations in and out of the factory. For Jervis, the realisation of this relationship from the part of the workers is seen as the foundation of an alternate therapeutic and preventive process. He insists on enforcing a refutation of the dominant medical practice as a capitalistic modus operandi; a process that appears to be a war on giving health and important position. Jervis sends the message that getting hold of our health means to get hold of our needs and the way our society produces and consumes:

"Neurosis that is born from the contradictions of the conditions of work and life of the worker [...] needs to be dealt with, both in prevention and in therapy, as a problem of collective importance. It is not possible to be isolated neither from the struggles for the defence of health in the factory (which as a consequence must expand in the entire setting and against the *medicine of the capital*), nor from a consideration of the subjectivity of the worker, that is the realisation of his relationship with the machine, the commodity and the organisation of the production"⁴⁰.

38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., p. 48

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Brief and rhapsodic considerations on the figure of Adriano Olivetti



Good ideas make history. Or so they should. When they don't, we speak of lost opportunities. According to the Italian dictionary Treccani, any unexploited opportunity is to be considered lost (*"L'occasione non sfruttata deve considerarsi perduta"*).

Is this the feeling that brings me closest to my country of origin? The intimate perception of having grown up watching opportunities being lost? Yes, it is: my personal feeling of melancholy toward Italy is nourished by the painful awareness of countless lost opportunities.

A few days ago, I watched again the film on Steve Jobs directed by Danny Boyle and based on Walter Isaacson's official biography. In the film, the founder of Apple is portrayed both as a genius and a monster. A minimalist, centraliser, control-freak and terrible father, Steve Jobs is known, among his many merits, for a fundamental intuition that would change the history of the Apple brand: computers are something that we live with, they are part of our everyday lives, so they must not only useful, but also beautiful.

This intuition was at the heart of the industrial policies of the Olivetti Company long before the birth of Steve Jobs: back in the 1950s, Adriano Olivetti was already recruiting young talents to design his typewriters, calculators, and early computers. In 1959, Ettore Sottsass received the Compasso d'Oro award for designing in 1957 the pioneering computer Elea 9003. Sottsass' idea was to create an elegant, compact-module computer, a "human-friendly" device guite different from the ceiling-high contraptions of the time. For many years, the Elea 9003 had a computing power far superior to any other computer on the market. Cutting-edge design and superior technology: that was Italy at the end of the 1950s.

According to Isaacson's biography of Steve Jobs, the watershed moment in the professional journey of the genius American entrepreneur was his participation in the Aspen Design Conference of 1981. At the event, which happened to be dedicated to Italian design, Jobs was impressed by the work of Mario Bellini, Sergio Pininfarina, Giorgetto Giugiaro, Ettore Sottsass, and others. He personally told Isaacson that the simple, functional and aesthetically pleasing quality of Italian design was an extraordinary source of inspiration for the Apple company and himself.

In a self-addressed letter found in his

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archive, Sottsass asked himself: "what should a computer look like? Not like a washing machine. I think that's a fantastic idea - that you look at the emotional aspects of technology". Emphasising the emotional aspect of technology means centring the machine's design on the individual, the human being, the person. In 1968, Sottsass designed, still for Olivetti, the beautiful and now iconic "Valentine", as if it were a typewriter used to write love letters.

Feelings, emotions and empathy happened to be at the heart of Adriano Olivetti's social and entrepreneurial philosophy. A loving father, an anti-fascist, and a man with a vision, Olivetti developed his own politics and policies of industrial production and promoted an ethical and "human" form of capitalism. In these times of confusion, when the world of economy shrinks from any talk about compassion and solidarity, it would be interesting to draw new inspiration from some of the old ideas of this great Italian entrepreneur. To Adriano Olivetti, profit and solidarity, enterprise and culture, industrial production and beauty, far from being antithetical, were meant to go together, like two sides of the same medal. When separated, contrasted, or made to compete with each other, they could only become impoverished and die.

Today, the attribute "impoverished" can literally be applied to the big dream of the so-called "creative economy", whose roots can be found in Adriano Olivetti's pioneering ideas. A few decades ago, with the development of the web and new technologies, the creative economy was promising radical changes in society and in the urban fabric. Today, that same

economy appears to have consolidated the privileges of the social category that produced it. Richard Florida, who only a few years ago saw creative professionals (artists, hipsters, founders of online start-up companies, etc.) as drivers of development and democratization in contemporary cities, seems to have radically changed his stance in his last book The New Urban Crisis. If the actors of the creative economy have produced a huge amount of wealth for themselves and for the neighbourhoods where they live, they ended up relegating the increasingly poorer sections of society to the outskirts of the cities, dominated by violence, drugs, and social malaise. In apocalyptic tones, Florida goes so far as claiming that the crisis of new urban centres is the fundamental crisis of our time and of contemporary capitalism.

Only ten years ago, Silicon Valley companies saw themselves as the ambassadors of a new. humanfaced capitalism, having provided the technological platforms that enabled the pro-democracy movements in the Middle East and the Arab world. Today, the optimism and trust in the emancipatory power of social media and of the people who control them are beginning to crack. On the one hand, we started to worry about the disproportionate power that social media such as Facebook wield over the electorate of any nation, often through the forging of fake news whose sole aim is to influence public opinion; on the other hand, we are beginning to consider with some suspicion the huge amount of personal information that "big tech" companies can gather about their users. One of the

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catchphrases of the internet era is: "if you're not paying for it, you're the product". We, the users, are ultimately the products of companies such as Alphabet, Amazon, Facebook and Microsoft. Their customers are the advertisers who allow them to make money. Facebook's new mission statement, "Give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together", raises a few eyebrows when we consider how autistic. self-referential and alienating social networks have become. Facebook actually does everything in its power to dodge any responsibility about what is being published, except for sexual contents about which the company's severity verges on bigotry. Showing a nipple? Unacceptable! Propaganda, lies and calumnies? Keep them coming! A woman breastfeeding? Out of bounds! Fake news conditioning and manipulating thousands of users? No problem! Facebook is only interested in making money and economic growth, not in the truthfulness of the published contents. The company does nothing to monitor the fake news that circulate on its platform, because it has no economic interest in doing so. This is where our feeling of disillusionment lies: we thought that technological platforms would revolutionise capitalism, making the system more humane and aware of people's needs, whereas big tech companies actually follow an entrepreneurial model that is reminiscent of Feudalism. Concerned as they are about their "cool", future-oriented and employee-friendly public image, these companies often find themselves entangled in depressing scandals about sexual abuse. I am thinking not only of Dave McClure,

founder of business accelerator "500 Startups", who publicly admitted to having harassed tens of female staff, or of UBER CEO Travis Kalanick, who resigned after numerous female employees complained about sexual blackmail within the company, but of the entire "big tech" system, which remains essentially patriarchal, sexist, and discriminatory.

According to a PitchBook survey, in 2016 women entrepreneurs received 1,5 billion \$ in venture capital, a long shot from the 58.2 billion \$ received by men. In order to obtain this capital, or even only a job in the new economy, women must reputedly endure various forms of inappropriate attention and sexual blackmail.

As early as the 1930s, Adriano Olivetti was making sure that his employees received all the attention, empathy and solidarity they needed. The Olivetti company, thanks to his ideas, was at the vanguard of the social issues of its time: women were granted paid maternity leaves, the staff was actively involved in the management of the company, and all the workers and their families had medical insurance. Exhibitions, concerts and film screenings were organised inside the factory, as well as lunch-break talks with writers, philosophers and artists. Architecture played a fundamental role: factory buildings were made entirely of glass, in order to ensure that the premises were luminous and well ventilated, and equipped with libraries and reading rooms. Working spaces were decorated with contemporary artworks. Art historian Giulio Carlo Argan wrote that the Olivetti did not only promote culture, but integrated

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it in its production cycle. An anomaly in the European and American industrial landscape, Olivetti hired intellectuals, poets, architects, artists and writers, who all contributed to feeding and reinventing the founder's visionary dimension. Olivetti believed in the centrality of human beings, and in the possibility of building human communities based on solidarity and brotherhood. Clearly, in Olivetti's vision, social services were not seen as a patronizing and occasional concession from the master, but as part of a political idea about the company's social responsibility.

Luigi Einaudi, who fled to Switzerland with Olivetti in 1944 to escape Nazi persecution, once said that it would take one generation to understand Olivetti's ideas. And it was precisely during his exile in Switzerland that Olivetti wrote his intellectual testament, L'ordine politico delle comunità ("the political order of the communities"), of project for reforming the Italian State on a federal basis and around the notions of community, bottom-up democracy and decentralisation. To him, "communities" were organic economic, administrative and political units driven by social contents and moral and spiritual aims. They were, first and foremost, real, geographically circumscribed and socially complex physical environments inside of which the dimensions of labour, culture, individual aspiration and collective emancipation representd distinct yet complementary aspects of community life and hence the ultimate goal of the company's profit.

I find it rather surprising that Zuckerberg's new mission statement (the previous one was "make the world more

open and connected") should emphasise the idea of community. Facebook does not aim to build "communities", but to observe its users and use that knowledge in order to sell advertisement. Facebook is an advertising agency. And like any advertising agency, it needs to justify its own existence by means of a good public narrative. In this sense, the idea of "building community" is just a great marketing trick, an empty and ambitious slogan that can compete with the titles of contemporary art biennale exhibitions. I do not know if Zuckerberg's ultimate goal is to make more money, as if he didn't have enough, but growing and making money is what he has proven to be best at so far. Moreover, numerous studies show that Facebook actually conditions us: researchers claim that the more time people spend on Facebook, the less happy they are. A 1% increase in "likes" and status updates is correlated to a 5 to 8% decrease in mental health. People allegedly sacrifice actual relationships that make them feel good in order to go on Facebook, that makes them feel bad.

In conclusion, what kind of community does Facebook aim to build? A community of the virtually depressed? And what if even Facebook were a lost opportunity – the umpteenth lost opportunity? I am persuaded that, whether we like it or not, we have inevitably become one single large organism of collective language, and the only chance we have to reinvent society must therefore necessarily rely on new technologies and social media. I am no luddite: social media, at the end of the day, are nothing but tools, which we must decide how to use and to what aim. And about the aims: whether the communities imagined by Zuckerberg and Olivetti are similar or not is up for the reader to decide.

Layout: 1° 20' 19" Corrections: 11' 48"

Biographies

Andrea Bellini

Andrea Bellini is the director of the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève and artistic director of the Biennial of Moving Images (Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement). He has previously been co-director of Castello di Rivoli, director of the art fair Artissima, curatorial advisor at MoMA PS1 and editor in chief of Flash Art International. Since he arrived at the Centre, he managed to fortify the institution's role in the Swiss and international art scene and relaunched the Biennial of Moving Images, one of the oldest events dedicated to video art. As the director of the institution, Bellini curated major exhibitions of emerging Swiss artists as well as historic and iconic figures. He is also a member of various comities, such as the CERN's Cultural Advisory Board, the Scientific Committee of Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donnaregina (MADRE) in Naples, the Acquisitions Committee of NMNM Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, the Advisory Committee of Arthub, Shanghai and the academic council of HEAD in Geneva.

Donatella Bernardi

Donatella Bernardi (Geneva, 1976) is a multidisciplinary artist working with installations, publications, films, essays and exhibition curatorship. In 2015, she was a guest curator at the Kunsthalle in Bern, an experience followed by the publication of *Into Your Solar Plexus* (Humboldt Books, 2016). In 2017, she exhibited a new body of work, *The Belly of the Phoenix*, at Last Tango, Zurich, curated by Linda Jensen and Arianna Gellini. From August 2017 until January 2018, she is in Zug, as Landis & Gyr artist in residency. Since January 2017, she is the Head of the MA Fine Arts at ZHdK, Zurich University of the Arts and was a professor at the Royal Institute of Art (Kungliga Konsthögskolan) in Stockholm (2010-2016). Her interests cover questions of power, gender, post-colonialism, racial injustice and capitalism. In December 2016, she presented a part of her research project *Comunità Olivetti* at the Swiss Institute in Rome, in partnership with the Work.Master, HEAD, Geneva University of Art and Design.

Alexandros Kyriakatos

Alexandros Kyriakatos lives and works in Lausanne. He is currently a fellow at the Sommerakademie Paul Klee working on the program *REALTY*, a project of the curator Tirdad Zolghadr which focuses on the role of contemporary art in gentrification. Kyriakatos is a member of BLOCC, a platform of artists born out *REALTY*, that aims to alter the compliance of contemporary artistic production to the displacement of urban communities. He graduated with a Master of Arts in Public Spheres at the Ecole cantonale d'art du Valais (ECAV), a degree which he pursued after having studied psychology and neurosciences and worked as a post-doctoral fellow in the Polytechnic School of Lausanne (EPFL).

Federica Martini

Federica Martini, PhD, is an art historian and curator. She is dean of Visual Arts at the Ecole cantonale d'art du Valais (ECAV) and a member of the artistsrun space standard/deluxe Lausanne. Previously, she was Head of the MAPS Master program at ECAV, and a member of the curatorial departments of the Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art, Musée Jenisch Vevey, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts/Lausanne and the Festival des Urbaines. In 2015-16 she was a research fellow at the Istituto Svizzero di Roma. Recent publications include: *My PhD is my art practice. Notes on the Art PhD in Switzerland* (2017, with P. Gisler); *Vedi alla voce: traversare* (2016, Traces); *Publishing Artistic Research* (SARN, 2014); *Tourists Like Us: Critical Tourism and Contemporary Art* (with V. Mickelkevicius, 2013); *Pavilions/Art in Architecture* (2013, Bruxelles: La Muette); *Just Another Exhibition: Stories and Politics of Biennials* (2011, Milan: postmediabooks).

Marcella Turchetti

Born in Ivrea in 1976, she is an art historian. She holds a degree in Preservation of the Cultural Heritage from the University of Parma, with a master's degree concerning Zodiac, an international review about contemporary architecture edited by Edizioni di Comunità, since 1958 until 1973. Since 2002 she works at the Associazione Archivio Storico Olivetti in Ivrea, where she collaborates with the organization of exhibitions, publications and cultural events, such as the great exhibit Olivetti 1908–2008, il progetto industriale for the centenary of the Olivetti company in 2008. She has lectured at LABA in Florence, at Domus Academy in Milan and in different institutions and schools. Recently she participated in Esposizioni / Exhibitions, an international convention organized by CSAC in Parma, she was a member of the research team for the catalogue Ettore Sottsass 1922-1978 (Silvana editoriale, 2017), published on the occasion of the exhibit Ettore Sottsass. Oltre il design by CSAC – University of Parma (2017–2018).

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Dummy production	2°	51'	37"
Production overview/planing	4 °	15'	42"

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Issue n. 2: Olivetti, poesia concreta An edition of the Art Work(ers) research project of the ECAV – Ecole cantonale d'art du Valais, Sierre Concept Art Work(ers), Federica Martini, Christof Nüssli **Research** Petra Köhle, Robert Ireland, Federica Martini **Editorial Assistance** Aurélie Strumans **Texts** Andrea Bellini, Donatella Bernardi, Alexandros Kyriakatos, Federica Martini, Marcella Turchetti **Translations** Daniela Almansi **Copy-editing Jasmine Bakalarz** Design typosalon, Christof Nüssli Printing Graphius, Ghent **Off-print** 600 copies **Publisher** art&fiction publications, www.artfiction.ch Distribution www.servidis.ch (CH), www.r-diffusion.org (F/B) ISSN 2571-7065 (Print), ISSN 2571-7073 (Online) Special Thanks: the authors, Associazione Archivio Storico Olivetti, Alain Antille, Corner College & Dimitrina Sevova, Giairo Daghini, Stéphane Fretz, Layout: 8'28" Cora Piantoni, Anne-Julie Raccoursier Corrections: 9'36"

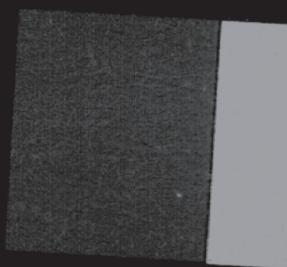
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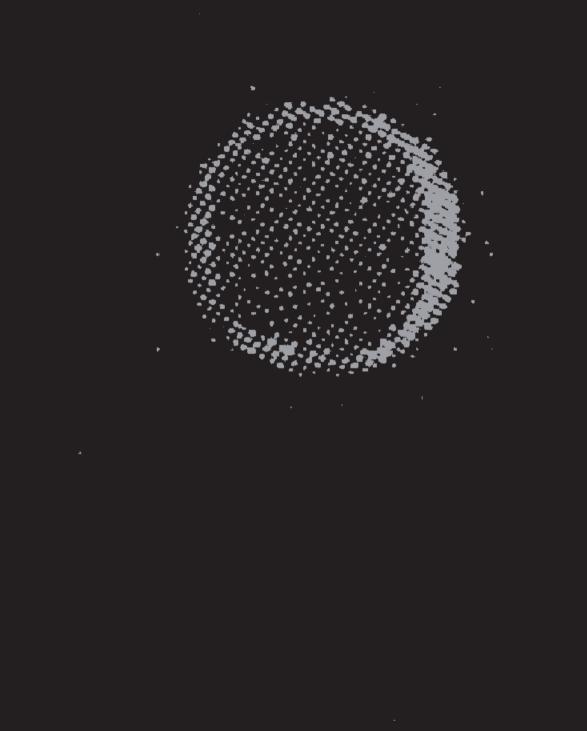




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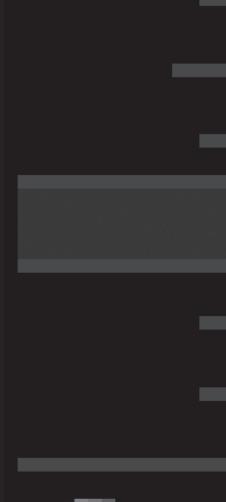
















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