

From the University of Ideas to the Geographies of Change: a path of formation through the civitas (citizenship) of art

Cittadellarte was founded in 1998, as an active organism for Michelangelo Pistoletto's *Progetto Arte* and operates pursuing the mission "To inspire and produce responsible change in society through ideas and creative projects".

Cittadellarte was born around the living nucleus, the pulsing brain, composed by the international residency programme UNIDEE-University of Ideas, which from July to October, annually gathers up to 20 young artists, creatives, researchers and professionals from diverse disciplines, from philosophy to architecture, from economics to politics, from design to social behaviour.

UNIDEE initiates a forge of ideas, a laboratory of projects and research, expressly oriented towards the activation of creative processes engaged in transformation, in a responsible sense, of civil society.

It evolves following, and in the mean time developing, an educational system based on co-authorship of its participants. They are no longer divided up as student and teacher, but instead are united in collaborative research and projects, as co-producers of shared knowledge and as activators of socially transformative projects. UNIDEE has created numerous developments and germinations. These new entities are born as "adult offspring", from Colombia to China, from Israel to Greece, from Great Britain to India, extending the practice of an art that is responsible and implicated in the generation of communal wellbeing throughout the more diverse organs of civil infrastructure.

Complementary to this process of direct reproduction, a series of initiatives were launched which adopted the educational system and the co-authorial projection of the University of Ideas in different contexts.

Through this journey, Cittadellarte has created the *Methods* initiative, a formation laboratory in which knowledge is produced by its own users, organisers and participants. As the name suggests, the issues concentrated on are the *Methods* of activation of transformative dynamics. This transformation of social contexts is meant in a responsible sense, and is achieved through artistic projects.

The participants of the *Methods* workshop learn methodologies of creative interventions of social transformation, and simultaneously offer as experts, a reasoned testimony. With the Educational Programme of the University of Ideas and with the *Methods* initiative, we intend firstly to identify a new humanistic and social discipline, that of *Art for Responsible Transformation of Society*. This is a discipline that is founded through the work of Cittadellarte and through the numerous contributions of those who operate concretely within the "glocal" civil fabric.

Part of the work consists in identifying the themes and study cases of this discipline; another part aims to practice its objectives. For this purpose, the *Methods* workshops are aimed towards the creation of nuclei, or knots which can become part of a network, made up from subjects of any nature (institutions, governmental and non governmental organisations, enterprises, individuals or groups, etc.) who develop artistic projects of transformation, in a responsible sense of social contexts.

We call this network the *Geographies of Change*. Around it we want (and this is the third operative objective of the *Methods* initiative) to create awareness (between those already part of it or who will participate in the future), communication and diffusion (between the operators of diverse sectors and civil society).

The *Geographies of Change*, therefore, results in perfect harmony with the co-authorship paradigm, which is both author and main recipient of the discipline of art for social transformation.

In this sense, the meaning of the term Cittadellarte is extended; Cittadellarte on the first level indicates the *cittadella* (citadel), the place of protection and defence of a universal heritage (that of art), moreover it recalls the term *città* (city), the amplified dimension, inclusive of the centre connected to the world's streets of communication and exchange, and finally it implies the concept of *civiltà* (civilization), a *civitas* (citizenship) of art, extended to the planet and its entire population.

This publication gathers together the work of the two first sections of the *Methods* workshop.

The first one took place in Cittadellarte in 2004, and the second one – as a *joint initiative* with Artfactories – within the context of ArteFiera, in Bologna, with the support of ArteFiera itself, the European Cultural Foundation and the Compagnia San Paolo, three entities who we would like to take this opportunity to thank again. We also thank the Regione Piemonte for their support.

Both the workshops are the result of the joint work of three different operative units, each one dedicated to a specific activity area of the social fabric, which form Cittadellarte's structure and are what we call *Uffizi* (Offices): the Politics Office, coordinated by Filippo Fabbrica, the Art Office, coordinated by Juan Sandoval and the Education Office, coordinated by Cristiana Bottigella.

The future *Methods* workshops consistent with their own premises and goals, will be held in various locations and will develop the three levels mentioned above: firstly, the gathering and sharing of practices of *Art for Responsible Transformation of Society*, secondly, contributing to the founding of a theoretical and practical discipline which is actually named Art for Socially Responsible Transformation; thirdly, developing the network of Geographies of Change.

In particular, *Methods* is a programme for centres and cultural organisations, to be realised in co-authorship with Cittadellarte; the workshops, which originate from this collaboration expressly represent a method to become an active part of the *civitas (citizenship) of Art for Responsible Transformation of Society*.

by **Paolo Naldini**
Managing Director
Cittadellarte - Fondazione Pistoletto