



**Paola Anziché:
Ingombri/Encumbrances**

An interview on the workshop dynamics as a moment of collective creation by Francesca Picchi.

The Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Foundation recently chose you for the inauguration of Greater Torino, an homage to the work of young artists from Turin, that was aimed at recognising young artists who have found this city to be the ideal place for conducting their research in art.

You're not exactly from Turin but your work has matured and been nurtured in the Turin's "cultural broth".

What are your reference points in this artistic "territory"?

More than a "cultural broth", I'd say it's a very elastic, and vast, fabric

The area is very interesting because there are a number of people who support artistic research. The first ones to show interest in my work were the curators of a.titolo, a non-profit organisation that began right here in Turin with the goal of promoting contemporary art that is oriented in social, political and cultural directions.

For the first edition of Greater Torino, the Sandretto Foundation Re Rebaudengo (a double personal where I've exhibited with Paolo Piscitelli), I was able to measure myself against the exhibition's curators Irene Calderon and Maria Teresa Roberto, and Giorgina Bertolino who managed the special projects.

In general, the Turin public is very responsive. As part of the interdisciplinary collaborations that I've developed, to give you another example of the interests alive in the city, Lisa Word, for the Opening festival in October 2009, invited me to the Royal Riding School (one of the theatrical spaces of the Teatro Stabile of Turin) to work with the Ballet of Esperia. I presented Instantaneous Landscapes, a project in which I was totally free to think about creating a performance and implement it with a dance company.



INGOMBRI ('encumbrances'), is a short-term workshop which you're working on and will be presented in Dortmund Kustverein on March 27th and 28th, after having already been inaugurated at the Sandretto Foundation. It seems to me that it's possible to interpret this as an evolution of your previous work. It reminds me, for example, of the work with fruit for Shopping-t (a performance centered around the idea of gift) or a work, even earlier, like Functional Fake objects. These works help you investigate the environmental unit which is determined between objects, gestures of the body, choreographed actions, movement, thoughts, installations of a sculptural nature. Explain how INGOMBRI represents the evolution of these works and what you've discovered?

INGOMBRI, the way I presented it at the Sandretto Foundation Re Rebaudengo during Greater Torino, is a workshop for an adult audience, invited to participate in a performance experience within a museum that has always been very careful, through the cultural mediation of art, to offer specific exhibitions and activities to its visitors: young people, adults, seniors.

Those who attended INGOMBRI on Feb. 25, were free to interpret a series of ideas and co-ordinates that I gave at the start. I began from the etymological meaning and a series of associations related to the theme ingombro (encumbrance). From this multitude of meanings, and especially from the acceptions related to the notion of impossibility, and from the complications that need to be dealt with by a body in movement, I compiled a series of images that served to stimulate the participants' creativity. Images of men carrying their home on their shoulders, for example, or carrying huge bags of plastic bottles while on their bikes ... you know, pictures of people that, despite their precariousness and fragility, manage to get by in dimensions that are enormous.





The workshop began with a brief introduction about the synonyms of space accompanied by illustrations of the chosen images: participants were asked to give free reign to their imagination and to concretely and physically experiment their “ingombro” (encumbrance). Cardboard boxes of various sizes were available along with masking tape.

Two very intense hours followed and, between slips and falls, the participants got all tangled up together trying to make increasingly complex ingombri (encumbrances). The situation ended up getting people involved in a creative, fun direction. A component of amused liberation prevailed, despite all the boxes impeding people’s mobility. They drifted together, groups were formed and then gradually were broken apart by sudden and unexpected interactions that simulated possible spontaneous architectural constructions. No-one was following set patterns or pre-established rules, but they continued to invent possible models of assembly, of movement, balance and imbalance.

Compared to other experiences of my research, including collaborations with dancers and performers that have characterised the work of my performances, this new direction allows me now to call into question some of the parameters I’d previously set in motion. My interest isn’t so much aimed at creating and defining the formal lines of the work, as much as it is to proceed by trial and error with the intention of including unexpected and seizing opportunities that hadn’t even been imagined: an empirical and material experience creating and determining the scope of work according to the idea of “learning by doing.”

What role does the entire mechanism of the workshop play in your research? I remember, for example, the workshop Temporary Constructions that you held at Careof in Milan in January 2009 which, in a certain sense, preceded the performance Tapis a Porter curated by Francesca Pasini. I imagine that this preparatory work with dancers, in part, affected or merged with the performance, and in this way, perhaps, was a mechanism that allowed you to study the possible reactions to your environmental actions.

The workshops are independent. There’s no direct link between them. In the case of Temporary Constructions I was mainly interested in the dialogue with the physical capabilities of the performer, as well as assessing their reactions to the set starting points for ideas about Temporary Constructions connected to the presence of the rugs. In that case, the rugs became concrete metaphors of the idea of territory, as well as being a symbol of journey, transition and nomadism. The recent experience of Aggrovigliamenti (entanglements) (the work that I presented at the Merz Foundation in August 2009) and Spaziando (an installation produced by the Sandretto Foundation for my personal exhibit in Greater Torino), shows quite a different character: they are, in fact, genuine performance installations that offer the public a chance to get wrapped up in and be involved with space and with the materials used.

In INGOMBRI, however, the public’s participation doesn’t follow a predetermined pattern, it’s open to spontaneity and their combinations are also dictated by chance, because it is a workshop designed for action - and interaction - by a group of curious, and responsive, people.

Is it possible to say that the running workshops allows you to observe the spontaneous behaviour established between people, and that this material is then useful to you in elaborating choreographed actions?

That’s not always the case. INGOMBRI, for example, is a work open to the public. It’s less structured than the work done with the dancers during Temporary Constructions. I don’t know yet if it will be turned into a performance. It’s true that I’m interested to observe the behaviour of the participants, but it depends on the project. I’m not interested in spontaneity in and of itself (that would spontaneous-ism) nor in the obsessive control of the demiurgic, solitary artist. Even the completion of the work itself can become an integral and essential part of the collective process of the workshop -- like will happen with the workshops for NABA during the Fuori Salone at the Triennale Bovisa in Milan with the extension of the work on Aggrovigliamenti (entanglements). In this regard, April 13th in Milan, I’ll be presenting the performance Shopping-t at the Riccardo Crespi gallery.



At the Merz Foundation you filled up the area outside the museum with the "tanks" from the former power station's silos. If, beyond any real constraints, you could choose your dream setting for an "ideal" version of Aggrovigliamenti (entanglements) in Milan, where would it be?

There are many infinite possibilities for implementation. There is no ideal version. It could be equally interesting as a three-person exhibit in a nice, cosy space, or with 300 participants in Milan's Piazza del Duomo.

