

# reACTION



*Stalker Teatro education project  
directed by Gabriele Boccacini  
in collaboration with the  
Education Department of Castello di Rivoli  
Contemporary Art Museum*

# INTRODUCTION

This project was carried out by the Italian theatre company Stalker Teatro for the first time during the Castello di Rivoli Summer School 2012, organized by the Education Department of the Castello di Rivoli Contemporary Art Museum (Turin - Italy).

The activity was developed with a short intensive workshop which was attended by the students of the Master in "Educational Management for Contemporary Arts" from Università del Piemonte Orientale and other interested persons.

The starting point of the research was a reflection on some art works from the permanent collection of Castello di Rivoli:

"Seeing Knowing" - Joseph Kosuth,  
"Igloo - Qaddafi's Tent" - Mario Merz,  
"Breathing the Shadow" - Giuseppe Penone,  
"The Nature of the Beast" - Goshka Macuga,  
"Containers" and "Children" - Christian Boltanski,  
"Mutterseelenallein (All Alone)" - Reinhard Mucha,  
the expanse of shoes and coats "Untitled" - Jannis Kounellis.

At the end of the experience, a public performance was presented by Stalker Teatro together with the workshop participants.

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# THE MISSION

*The project "reACTION" includes a workshop and the production of a live performance to be realized by Stalker Teatro together with a group of not-professional people, in relation to the artworks of a contemporary art museum*

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As well as the "old art" allows us to empathize with what could be life in other times, "contemporary art" offers useful tools for a stimulating reading and the interpretation of our time.

After the conquests of the historical avant-garde of the first half of the last century, which allowed us to consider as artistic languages also forms of expression of everyday life, we can use creative languages without necessarily knowing the academic expressive techniques.

The educational goal of the project "reACTION" does not concern the conveyance of skills related to techniques, but a concrete experience of art, based on the stimuli arising from the artworks of the museum. The objective is the creation of "linguistic devices" that can allow the meeting and exchange between the workshop participants and the general audience. A "linguistic device" for us is a rule of the game, which can motivate a concrete action in space.



# METHODOLOGY

Every artworks chosen will have a particular aesthetic vision, which may stimulate the different creative reactions of the participants in the workshop.

On the basis of this process of interaction with the artwork, we will identify the "linguistic devices" that will give life to performative action / drama.

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momenti della performance realizzata in occasione dell'iniziativa Summer School organizzata dal Dipartimento Educazione del Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea | luglio 2012



The action of the performers is an essential aspect of "dramatic" language (the origin of the Greek word "drama" means action).

From these emotional experiences, stimulated by the contemporary artworks, the theatrical actions will arise (as a reaction). The actions presented at the end of the workshop will not be the representation of something that is not there, but they will be instead concrete actions carried out by the performers in their dynamic interaction.

# PROJECT PHASES

## 1st phase

Organization and planning meetings with the Education Department of the host museum.  
Identification of the artworks in the museum to be considered for the project.  
Communication of the initiative.

## 2nd phase

One week workshop  
4/5 days, 3/4h each.

## 3rd phase

Public performance realised by Stalker Teatro performers together with the workshop participants.

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Jannis Kounellis | senza titolo  
cappotti, piombo, scarpe  
dimensioni determinate dall'ambiente  
Fondazione CRT Progetto Arte Moderna  
e Contemporanea  
in comodato d'uso presso  
Castello di Rivoli  
MUSEO D'ARTE CONTEMPORANEA,  
RIVOLI-TORINO



ODISSEA DEL TEATRO IN EUROPA - ARTEATRO  
progetto realizzato al MUSEO D'ARTE CONTEMPORANEA  
di Varsavia da Michelangelo Pistoletto e da Stalker Teatro  
aprile 1994



# LETTER OF MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO

*written on the occasion of the International  
Performing Art Festival "Differenti Sensazioni"  
organized in Grugliasco by Stalker Theatre*

*Turin 20.7.1991*



[...] There is a phenomenon that is the basis of the metamorphosis taking place in the world and there is a phenomenon that is at the top.

These are the two poles that trigger the energy that pervades the sphere of humanity.

On one hand, macroscopic changes occur, involving the planet into a revolution never inconceivable before, in the middle is the passive resistance of structured thinking and on the other hand, there is the lifeblood of the bottom that decodes the signs of centralized culture, such as yogurt enzymes.

I find this lifeblood right in the theater groups to which I'm addressing this letter.

Maybe they know this, some of them certainly do, others perceive it and others follow a mood instinctual rather than rational, but I think it is important to make it clear that this reality exists.

I am not referring here to a specific theatrical issue, but to the peculiarity that the theater offers to the entire artistic context as an active link with life.

In the field of visual art (here it comes my original reference) the affirmation of the product in the consistency of the object, even if virtual, as the only mediation, brings back the same seed of transformation to the real immanentistic value.

And this becomes extremely problematic and serious when it refers, in a clear manner, to the solutions of the same artists who took part in the setting out of a different thought.

It is precisely for this reason that in the sixties the "ZOO" was born.

And it is for this reason that I intend, beyond any other judgment, the work of young theater groups as the only revolutionary strong form and uncontaminated. As the only guarantee of union between "art" and "being" [...]

This theater is art, is the Art. It is the only vehicle released. Therefore capable of dealing with a real, even deep change, beyond the limits of space and time, because it is plugged into the daily practice without conditioning.

In the 70's I did some work and formulated situations that are entitled "L'arte assume la religione". I see these groups as the apostles, indeed they are, of the thought that brings art through the view as original and fundamental phenomenon.

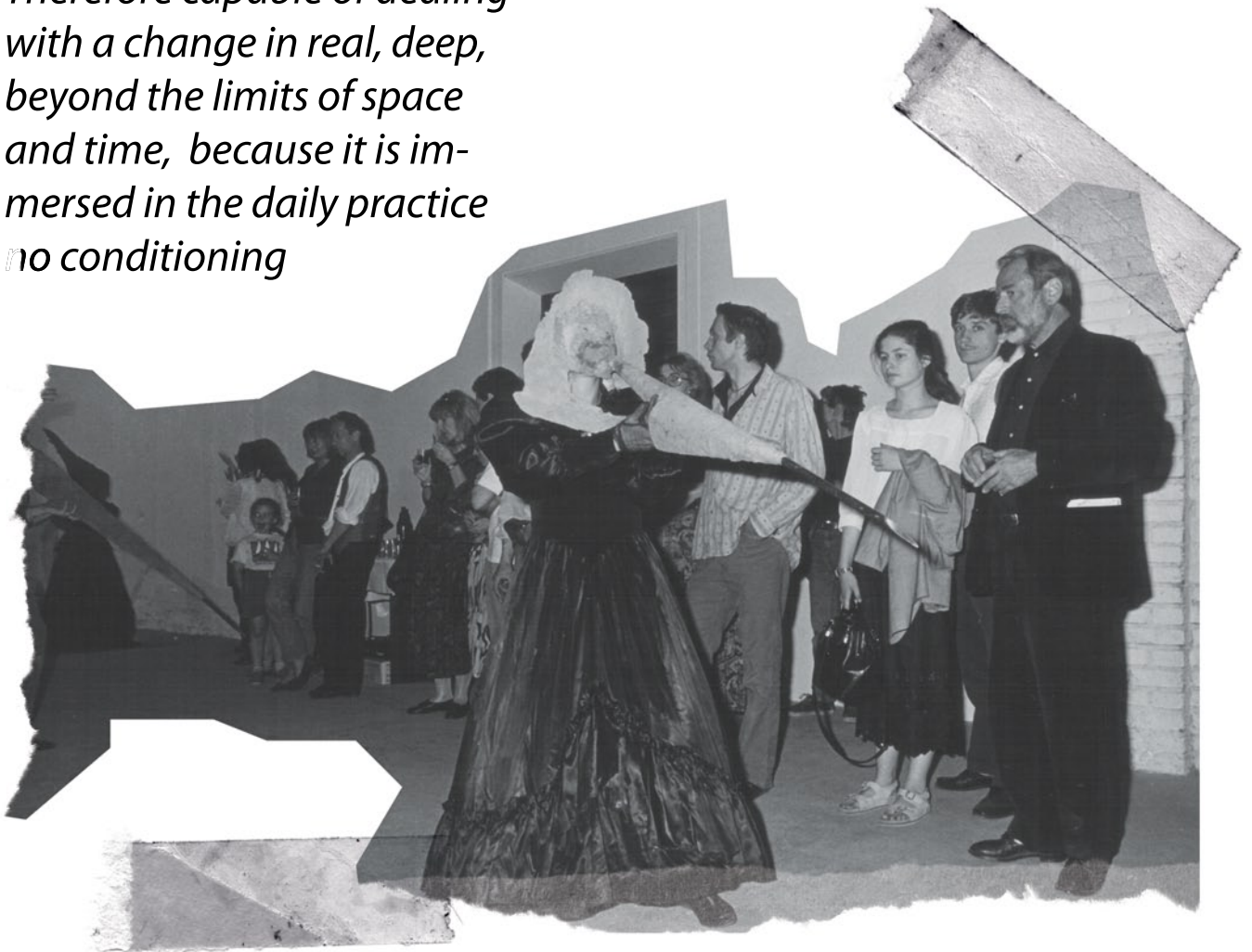
Without emphasis, or programmatic policy statements, theater groups meet in workplace, such as Le Serre Grugliasco, and produce a context and a social relationship about art that is absolutely without equal in the rest of society.[...]

This is what happens in the modern catacombs of art that goes beyond the same expectations of Art.

Here in Grugliasco the host group has prepared dinner every night for all, after the shows: a moment of irreplaceable confluence. They know it.

*Michelangelo Pistoletto*

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# CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL THEATRE

In contemporary theater, we can distinguish some experiences that have the characteristics of "art theater" and experiences that have instead the priorities of the "social theater".

Define these different specificities, among the many others on the contemporary theater, it would be long and complex. Here we would like to affirm that these two aspects (the artistic value and social value) are not necessarily contradictory, but rather a synthesis is possible where an aspect can be enhanced by the other.

With "reACTION" project we imagined a "contemporary and social theater" that can simultaneously develop both aesthetic qualities and popular participation within social sharing, which is essential to full realization of the theater in its contemporary, because unlike other media (literary, artistic, or musical), the theater can not exist without its original context and reference.

The commitment and the energies of all participants is aimed at the creation of "possible languages" such as vehicles and contexts to strengthen the sense of belonging to a community, to be rediscovered and perhaps, in our contemporary, to be reinvented.

Another important aspect is the consideration of the different languages of contemporary art (multidisciplinarity), each of which can be a stimulus and source of a theatrical action: the starting point could be theater, or music, or dance or the visual arts, but the goal is to create a choral action (drama), shared by multiple people.

This is possible with the languages of contemporary art that, unlike the academic disciplines that have specific codes and styles for which it is necessary to practice techniques for years, can be available to everyone through creative experiences.

Mario Merz | Igloo (Tenda di Gheddafi)  
tuboiaie in ferro, acrilico su tela di juta  
240 x 8 500 cm. Castello di Rivoli  
MUSEO D'ARTE  
CONTEMPORANEA, 1987  
Foto di  
Andrea Guermani





The project "reACTION" intends therefore to be a work of high artistic profile and high-impact spectacular, with a social aim of requalification of the area determined by the innovative relationship between the people involved in the project and the audience.

The address of the artistic research concerns therefore "art in the social contexts", ie the verification of the communicative potential of the languages of contemporary art, working with the inhabitants of the territory.

During the many experiments conducted by Stalker Theatre with this methodology of work, both in Italy and in other countries, it was always possible

involve hundreds of citizens (even with no previous experience and coming from different social background) in the preparation of large events where the artistic operators can share the creation without showing differences between the roles of professionals and workshop participants, who become in effect co-protagonists of the performance.

This methodology allows therefore to bring the languages of contemporary art among the people, even those with fewer opportunities to learn about cultural events.

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Goshka Macuga | The nature of the Beast (La natura della bestia)  
2009 installazione, tecnica mista: arazzo, tavolo in legno e vetro,  
sedie in pelle e metallo, scultura in bronzo su base  
in legno arazzo: 290 x 450 cm; tavolo: n. 87 x 400 cm e  
sedie: 16 elementi, 95 x 58 x 56,5 cm ciascuna;  
scultura: 55 x 86 x 58 cm; base: 100 x 62 x 58 cm  
Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea  
Deposito permanente Fondazione CRT  
Progetto Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, 2009

# STALKER TEATRO

The artistic core of Stalker Teatro have worked together since setting up the 'Political Collective' at Turin Academy of Fine Arts in 1975, the heyday of Italy's post-68 cultural and political uproar.

This has left an enduring mark on the company's work which is characterised by a strong commitment to artistic experimentation within socially sensitive or challenging situations.



The founding members of Stalker Teatro were involved with Turin City Council's ground-breaking 'cultural animation' projects in the late 70s and helped set-up Turin's first professionally run youth theatre in 1976. In 1981 they started a residency in Italy's largest psychiatric clinic in Grugliasco which led to the formal foundation of Stalker Teatro in 1986. Using a distinctive style developed from site-specific events, performance art and participatory theatre, Stalker Teatro have performed throughout Italy, France, Germany, Poland and UK.

Stalker Teatro continue to be based in Turin, where they regularly collaborate with the Museum Castello di Rivoli, the City Council's outreach initiative 'Progetto Periferie', and Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto (Biella). Every year the company organises The International Festival of Performing Arts – Differenti Sensazioni. Recent collaborations abroad include residencies at Marstall – Bavarian State Theatres (Munich), the Academies of Fine Art of Vienna and Munich, the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Warsaw , the Tramway in Glasgow, the "Laznia Nowa" Theatre in Cracow, the Theatre Modrzejskiej in Legnica (Poland).

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# OFFICINE CAOS

Stalker Teatro permanent turin base. An extensive theatre location dedicated to the creation of cultural events together with local inhabitants. Workshop areas for the formation, education and research of theatre for local schools and for youths in collaboration with the city's university institutes.

A new and multi-functional theatre space located in Piazza Montale, in the Vallette district of Turin, for all kinds of shows: theatre, dance, concerts, happenings, art performances, art settings and meetings. 350 seats in mobile tiers adjustable stage space: front scene, on a central plan, performance pathway, for a total area of 20m x 30 m per 6 m height; sound and light system equipment, two motorized rings 9 m x 8 m, control room, foyer, dressing rooms, cafeteria, labs.



Containers e children  
di Christian Boltanski  
foto di Andrea Guermani

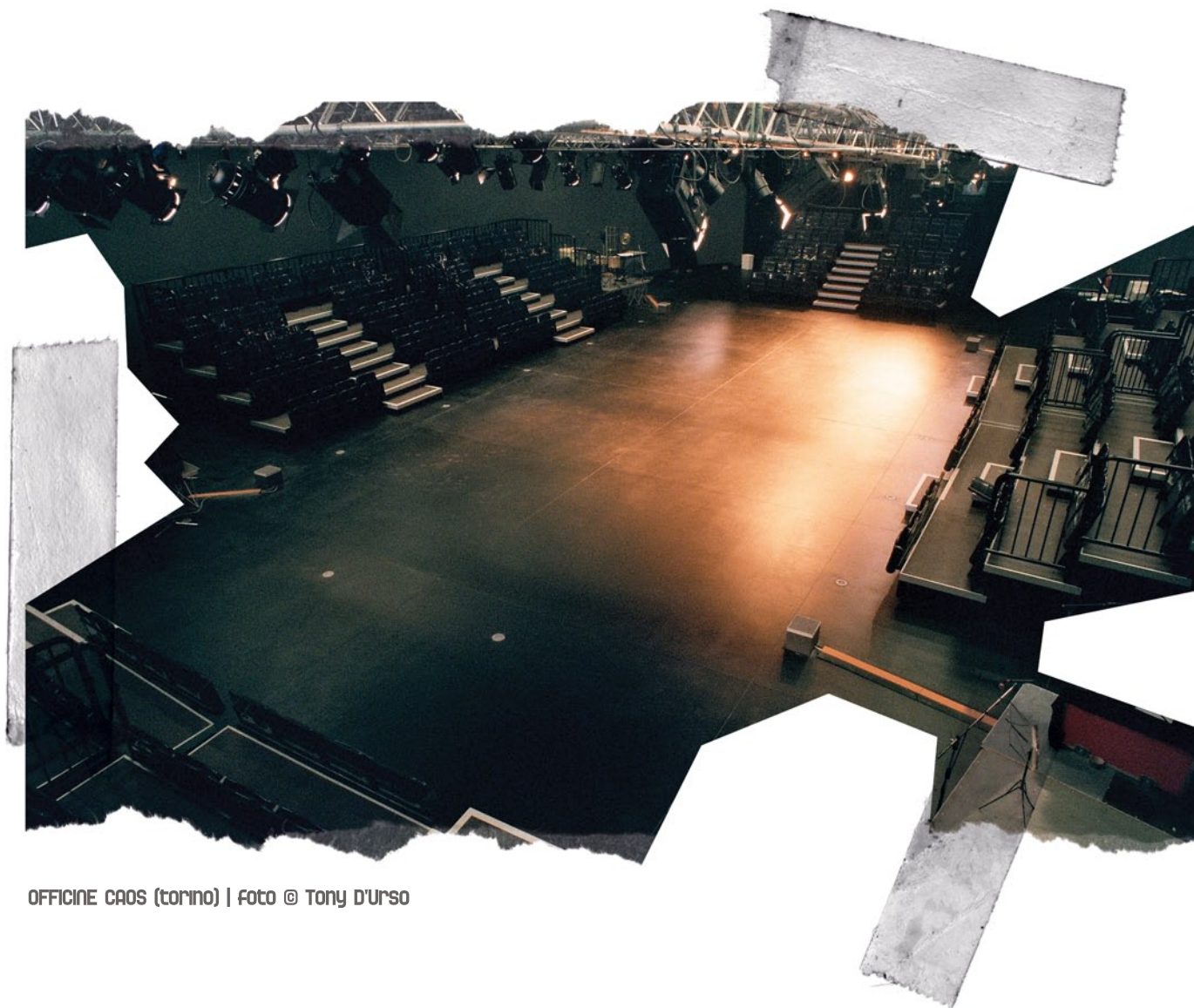


In relation with the initiatives of the City Councils of Turin and Biella, the "ArteTransitiva" programme pursues an aim of great educational and cultural interest, such as presenting and applying the languages of the contemporary arts to a social scale.

A cultural research and production centre, offering workshops for every one to create artistic events and performances intended for the entire city area and presented for international exchange.

Each year, a staff of thirty people from the Stalker Theatre, many guest artists and experts, along with more than a hundred citizens taking part in the theatre workshops and over ten thousand spectators, all give life to an innovative social theatre where the utopia of a popular and shared contemporary art is consciously and socially turned into reality.

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OFFICINE CAOS (torino) | foto © Tony D'Urso

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