

Exploring Rural Territory as a New Medium

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Among the most relevant phenomena of the last years, knowledge economy has risen in importance. Seen as a development strategy for over-territorial growth, it is strictly linked to the change of vision from global to local and it is strongly influenced by the competitive rules of globalization, among which we can find distinctive elements of a territory that represent an essential benefit. Rural areas, that often suffer for competitive disadvantages in terms of infrastructures, services, knowledge and opportunities, are anyway characterized by some strongly connotative elements such as living sustainability and cultural identity. It is possible, therefore, to consider a vertical overview that is not conventional and alternative to stereotypes or rural tourism, and that is achievable not only through increasing the value of cultural, historical, productive and environmental richness of one territory but as well through improving all peculiar resources of a territory, starting from its history always allowing new languages and new ways in order to preserve and hand them down. Inspired by this logic, Interferenze and Mediaterrae Vol.1 are two projects oriented to firmly re-design the identity of a rural territory. Both of the projects aim at interpreting local dimension in a global overview and putting into practice a way of communication connected to planning and achieving cultural production actions, which interpose, between transmitter and recipient, not only a simple and rational message, but something of unexpected that is not possible to express, but only to feel. Both projects are developed in Irpinia, a rural region immersed in the deep heart of South Italy, enriched by landscapes full of abstract, wind and infiniteness, steeples, towers, narrow and quiet streets, place of an historical metabolism that is slow and almost solemn in its ancestral rituals. Interferenze is a festival which investigates and experiments relations and intersections among new technologies, territorial roots and cultures. In the constant research of connections of elements belonging to technology, tradition and rural landscapes, Interferenze puts forward its own view of an integrated development of territories. It offers an unusual writing of the natural environment which, through rural landscapes, outlying lands and the “inappropriate places” catches a glimpse of the ultimate sense of a complex action of a semantic reclaiming of identity and sustainability of territories. Mediaterrae Vol.1 was a further evolution

of this project' strategy, by extending the basis of the work begun in 2003 with Interferenze. The project had involved a network of stakeholders that is operating on Irpinia territory and is working on a series of rural development projects oriented to establish a structured system among the most active and qualified resources in the whole area. Eighteen audio and video artists belonging to digital art scene and coming from different countries in Europe and overseas were invited to confront themselves with the tradition of Irpinia, in a project aimed at documenting the cultural and environmental heritage of a whole territory, between nature and technology, tradition and vanguard, past and future. This residency project, that was also an audiovisual production and a final event, was focused on music tradition of Tarantella from the little village of Montemarano. The Montemaranese is a peculiar form of Tarantella with an ancient and mysterious origin, which is absolutely relevant from an ethnomusical point of view, and is played with popular tradition instruments like ciaramella and zampogna, assisted by clarinet. During the Carnival of Montemarano, the invited artists have been able to join the locals and their rites in which "the forces of tradition are competing with the ones of modernity" (G. Gala), being assisted during all operations of sampling and production of audiovisual material or consulting literary and iconographic sources. The final result was not only an event at Theater Carlo Gesualdo, in Avellino, but mainly a DVD release (10.000 copies printed), containing a film documentary shot during the whole residency project and seven audio-video works. The key factor of projects like Interferenze and Mediaterrae lies in the relationship with a territorial system available to become a substrate upon which it's possible to insert cultural production actions oriented to extend awareness on rural territory potential as a fruition place of an all-embracing experience. A place in which both the traditional forms of territory knowledge and the possibility of increasing the value of rural context as a new and unknown fruition field of cultural actions can converge. The territory, not anymore as a geographic place or a branding system, becomes an inland space into the media system, transforming itself in a medium: through the event, or its media representation, the space that separates transmitter and recipient is filled and a "distraction" of communication surface happens: a relation is realized, communication is activated. The rural territory is seen therefore not as a product anymore, but as a (new) medium with which to communicate and get in touch in a creative way as long as something unexpected can happen in the space between transmitter and recipient, experimenting unexpected relations through processes, strategies and results of the same communication.

References

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