

Lorena Giuranna, Carolina Italiano, Marzia Migliora, *Behaviours. Urban mining / rigenerazioni urbane*, Corraini, Mantova, 2016

GIURANNA: The third working session of the day focuses on keyword “behaviour”.¹
This term immediately brings to mind the Venice Biennale 1972, when the commissioner Mario Penelope gave the famous title “Opera e Comportamento” to the exhibition in the gardens. In that particular moment in history, the materiality of artworks gave way to all of those immaterial practices that could be juxtaposed with anthropological or social research, something that we will try to do today. Obviously it is always difficult to try to compare different poetics, but in this case we could discuss questions related to experience, relationships, history, identity and society and develop discussions around the works by Cesare Pietroiusti, Marzia Migliora and Luca Francesconi.

ITALIANO: I would now like to leave the floor to Marzia Migliora, whose work connects to much more contemporary history and archaeology, that of the industrial activity of Gallarate.

MIGLIORA: My work, *Made in Italy*, is the result of a series of reflections that have accompanied my artistic research for many years. This focuses on the multiple aspects related to work, in particular to the relationship between man and his profession. In Gallarate, I found very fertile ground for my work. I had the possibility to visit and conduct my research in former textile companies that, historically, had some of the world’s most renowned fashion houses as their clients. Many of these companies, despite representing the excellence of Made in Italy, have gone out of business: craftsmanship, workmanship and high-quality materials have not withstood the crisis and they have now been closed and abandoned due to bankruptcies and seizures. My project does not seek to focus specifically on the history of these companies, but to highlight the symbolic events that have affected them as representative cases of so many other Italian companies. In the factories have been closed for years, still in the silence, among the abandoned machines, dust, clutter and emptiness, I tried to find beauty, the traces of those who worked between those walls each day, the value of craftsmanship and creation. *Made in Italy* is a painful landscape which allows us to see what was once there through what remains. In the video, there is a sequence of static images from a fixed camera would show the suspension of time inside these desolate factories that were once productive, alternating with images that, through some small interventions with motion and lighting, bring some sense of life to these places. The video installation at MA*GA asks the spectator to immerse themselves in the work, as in Ugo La Pietra’s magnificent sculptures, vision devices which need a volunteer in order to immerse themselves in them so as to discover a new point of view on the surrounding reality, on something that happens and is happening to us. My work for “Urban Mining” came about after reading some research compiled by Parco del Ticino and Legambiente, in which it had been documented that²
more than 90 different companies in Gallarate (in textiles and other industries) disposed their wastewater directly into the Arno. Many people in Gallarate recall the days in which the water was tinged each day with different colours, depending on what work was going on in the different textile companies. I thought about the violence of this production waste on the small river, which was too delicate to resist such an impact. Nowadays, perhaps, there is more awareness, but certainly in the

1960s and 1970s, when production in Gallarate was high, nobody considered the problem of sustainability, they just blindly thought of producing and making money. The Arno has suffered for many years and this is perhaps because we paid for those massive productions; and this is another of the issues addressed by my work. The development and economic boom had a tremendous impact on the places we inhabit, and we are still paying the price. I imagined going into one of the many waste pipes that were once active and which are still visible along the banks of the Arno. Where would I have arrived if I retraced the path taken by those toxic waters? \

What would I have found at the source of the waste? Work, industriousness, rolls of fabric, people engaged in designing, embroideries, women sitting and sewing, noisy machines, reels, spools of thread. The situation of the factories is no longer like this, unfortunately, and there are very few manufacturing companies.

GIURANNA: Particularly important is the end of the video which is linked to the installation in the museum: a series of buckets taken from different industrial contexts. Can you clarify this aspect?

MIGLIORA: Yes, in one of these factories, I found a very peculiar situation, a series of buckets that collected rainwater from a leaking roof. This collection of rainwater, “clean”, struck me. It was a paradoxical gesture from someone who, in order to preserve what remained inside the closed factory, placed those buckets as if they were in an art installation. The idea for the end of the video was therefore that of making a symbolic gesture: a man takes one of these buckets filled with clean rainwater taken from a closed textile company, he takes it to the Arno and pours it in. Taking a bucket of rainwater to the river and placing a dozen or more taken from the company in the installation at the MA*GA is nothing more than the final gesture of my work, the ending. A symbolic gesture that seeks to establish a new relationship, one geared towards greater respect, between locals and the river.