

Practices | Sep 2018

Dialogues Interviews Mariarosa Lamanna, Founder and Director of Maison Ventidue



Marcelo Martinez Vega, *HOMME-FOOD/HOMELESS* (2017). Image courtesy of Maison Ventidue

Overview

Dialogues interviews **Mariarosa Lamanna**, founder and director of **Maison Ventidue**, a residency program based in Bologna (Italy). In this interview we talk about the notion of **home intimacy** and **domesticity**, which Maria Rosa investigates by welcoming artists and performers from all over the world to produce site-specific projects right in her own apartment.

Mariarosa, what inspired you to create a residency program based on the notion of domesticity?

My very first need was that to inhabit a space artistically – which went hand in hand with my personal need to have a home in Bologna. At the very beginning, I did not have any curatorial aspirations, but I knew that I wanted to share the space with something else and someone else. We founded the residency in 2014, but the ideas Maison Ventidue are based on go back to some years earlier. We started out by hosting live music performances in the apartment I now live in and which is still Maison Ventidue headquarter. Right after I started living in the apartment, I also started hosting a wider range of artistic performances and experimenting what worked or didn't in a very empirical way, which resulted some years after in having some solid formats and specific directions. We now have three residency programs. Homemade is dedicated to visual and performance artists who work with site-specific installations; Homemade Design is addressed to designers and architects who work to design customized solutions for the space; as to the third one, we have been developing it for some months and will be dedicated to welcome artists coming from countries with situations of political instability.

Homeworks is your latest production.

Yes, we collaborated with the video-making duo Marsala and participated together in a show – 999. A Collection Of Questions About Contemporary Living – at the Triennale di Milano during last Spring. Marsala are interested in investigating the role and function of living spaces in the contemporary age. We decided to play a bit in-between voyeurism and exhibitionism. We were video-surveilled 24/24 in the living spaces of our apartments and the cameras were transmitting live on the outside. We basically worked on a very intimate level – our private apartment – and opened it up to the entire city.

While I was researching about Maison Ventidue, some definitions I read about in Bachelard's The Poetics of Space came to my mind. I am referring to the notion of home intimacy – Bachelard talks about the domestic space as a concentration of intimacy and puts it in contrasts with what he calls the city-ocean. How does the intimacy of the spaces at Maison Ventidue relates to the city outside?

What I have been learning in the last years is to open small doors and really choose the right ones depending on the project I am curating. It is an accurate sartorial action. I have also to say that Bologna as a city has been very welcoming and supporting since we started a dialogue with the local administration.

Bachelard also argues that when we read about any description of a home, we cannot but recall our own. How do residents at Maison Ventidue elaborate the intimacy of a home which is not their own?

I noticed artists are completely alien to the space when they first enter it, they pay attention to the perimeters a lot. I would compare the process to the moment you come back from a trip and you bring with you some exotic pieces you just bought. After some time, it is like the home absorbs them and they just become part of it. With artists, it works just like the same.

You live in the apartment. How does your personal home intimacy relate to the takeover by an extraneous agent? How do you experience it on a personal level?

It is super hard. I had to set some bonds on myself, although this doesn't always succeed and it is not always necessary either. When I try to avoid any kind of limit, I end up being a victim, but I also experimented with setting limits which revealed to be too strict and that made me lose the chance to get to know someone who was completely different than me. This experience has been definitely testing my tolerance and making me learn to be more strong, resilient and open to change.

It sounds like you identify with your home, which once gets invaded, makes also feel you completely annihilated.

Exactly, it is a very interesting process. It is like a journey during which I have been learning a lot about myself, although I stayed home.

Mariarosa Lamanna is a professional musician and teacher. Since 2014, she has been the co-founder and director of Maison Ventidue, based in Bologna (Italy).

www.maisonventidue.com