







Urbanresistdance was developed by a small group of very diverse people who nonetheless had certain irrational desires in common: to climb walls, share music and dance in the rubble. The postindustrial cities of the West offer the perfect grounds for satisfying these desires: with production plants relocated, military barracks closed down and historic sites abandoned, our cities hold countless areas ripe for urban exploration.

These sites are closed off, nearly always inaccessible, and invisible even to the people living right beside them. With no purpose or useful function, they are at once a monument to waste and spaces of freedom scattered among the uninterrupted stretches of retail property that characterize our city. They are no longer institutional, residential or commercial, ignored even by those who own them. Our goal – and, we believe, our right – consists in reclaiming them and using them for something positive.

Because inside, unexpectedly, magic is being staged: buildings that were once rational lose their original functional meaning to instead give rise to unexpected forms of geometry, framed by wildly growing vegetation like outposts of the end of the world. Exploring them, you might even come across pieces that artists wanted to leave inside, murals and installations that no museumgoer will ever encounter. These spaces grant a degree of freedom that makes them exceptional sites for artistic experimentation. Our artistic approach, devoted to the history, present and potential future of these spaces, brings sound and music together with the organization of Extemporatory Music Sets: free musical events that give people the opportunity to once again experience space, discovering new forms of geometry by listening and dancing. Our exploratory adventures always lead to a social event in which we share the aesthetic impression these places had on us with a wider circle of people.

To create these EMS we make field recordings, collecting the sounds that emerge within these spaces, their “screams” and “whispers” ... the outcome is a collection of sounds, a live material. This research is an essential element of our project in that it allows us to direct our musical choices, incorporating them into the pre-existing sound environment.

The design and construction of the audio equipment required for re-interpreting our chosen environment represents another fundamental step. We prioritize recycled materials combined with various sound diffusion technologies (miniature amplifiers, vibration speaker ...) to create portable sound systems with their own battery-based autonomous power supplies, versatile enough to be used in any space we choose. We use the same approach to create the lighting, constructing lights and projectors using reverse engineering techniques.

So far, less than a year after the project was developed, we have organized four Extemporatory Music Sets in the city of Bologna and similar events in Munich, Brussels and Lille as well as collaborating



UrbanResist Dance





with the street poster art festival Cheap 2014 and the guerilla gardening group “Terra di Nettuno,” providing a sonic dimension for the activist interventions.

In Munich we were hosted by the cultural association Lotringer_13 Laden as part of a five-day workshop (22-26 - 04/14) they had organized on “Urban Actual and Virtual - Site Specific Rivendication.” We presented our artistic project on the second to last day of the workshop as part of a wider debate about urban activism, at the municipal sites managed by the Lotringer folks. One important objective of the discussion was to identify an ad hoc location for staging an Extemporaneous Music Set the next evening, at the end of the five days. Through this process of collective research, we were able to locate a highly evocative abandoned space: the Munich Olympiastadion Station, the former train station built specifically for the 1972 Summer Olympics and officially closed in 1988.

This site is situated northwest of Munich near a park that is regularly used by a wide variety of people, in clear contrast to the state of abandonment characterizing the former railway station with its dead ends.

For the EMS, which was completely free and accessible to anyone, we used a phono-suitcase and other lightweight, portable equipment. Here as elsewhere, the music created relationships in an environment in which everyone who showed up played an active role in the process of reinterpreting the space, bringing their own music and sharing it with others as well as improvising visual performances with extemporaneous lighting.

What is there to add: dance & music, the perfect combination for generating new forms of aggregation in the kinds of invisible spaces that no one would ever think of entering but which offer unexpectedly exciting environments.

We seek to achieve this same effect with our next EMS, a special project for the electronic music and visual arts festival Robot that will be held in the fall (<http://www.robotfestival.it/2014/ita/index.html>). The festival's theme this year is Lost Memories, and our contribution will involve repairing the torn threads of the memories associated with an amazing space all but forgotten in the center of Bologna. The location is still secret, but all you have to do to participate is sign up with our mailing list (<https://www.tumblr.com/register/follow/urbanresistdance>) and wait until the night before to find out all the details of the event.





UrbanResistDance, cleaning, Bologna Munich 2014 |

