

LAVERONICA
arte contemporanea

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Proloco #4

“Why don't you open a gallery in Milan?”

We started to think about the idea for Proloco during the Architecture Biennale in 2016 titled Reporting From The Front. The invitation proposed by the curator Alejandro Aravena to the participants was to identify a battle to fight.

In specific terms, we were very much struck by the project *Onore Perduto* by the Sicilian architect Maria Giuseppina Grasso Cannizzo. In the catalogue text, with regard to this work, the Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef was quoted, according to whom “the mosquito is the only animal capable of defeating a rhinoceros. Or rather, a swarm of mosquitos. A metaphor for Capitalism, the rhinoceros possesses an untamed, brute force that destroys everything that stands in the way of its interests (competitiveness), annihilating all smaller beings (local businesses). The only strategy for survival,” according to Max-Neef, “is to become so small as to no longer constitute a threat for that formidable force (and thus be left in peace), yet at the same time be able to suffocate the pachyderm if a common agreement to act is reached.”

In the project, the architect maintained that the only way to make a mark on a territory and trigger change is to work on the small scale.

The *Proloco* project arises from the encounter with a series of artistic realities that have operated in specific territories, forming pockets of resistance and adopting the small scale as an operational model.

For a year, the gallery will be transformed into a space that will tell of these encounters and will give voice to these realities through a series of exhibitions, concerts, presentation of books and workshops, in dialogue with the local community.

Among others, it will be our pleasure to host The ‘E Zezi Workers’ Group, a music ensemble founded in the 1970s in the Alfa Sud factory in Pomigliano D’Arco in collaboration with Marinella Senatore; Gino Gianuzzi, who will present the archive of the Neon gallery that he founded in Bologna in 1981; Giuseppe Frau gallery, a collective of Sardinian artists active in the Sulcis area, where they founded a civic school of contemporary art.

Proloco will end in August 2019, once again featuring the one-day exhibition *Wherever centro ricreativo di quartiere* by the Ispica-born painter Francesco Lauretta, previously displayed in the gallery in 2008.

Francesco Lauretta

Proloco #4 – Wherever, centro ricreativo di quartiere popolare (remix).

Opening Friday 16 August 2019, 9 pm

Wherever, a neighbourhood leisure centre. *Wherever*, the idea arrives from afar, from 11 September, or while browsing through a recent interview with Ricardo Villalobos, or simply listening to the advice of my twin brother craftsman and decorator – that noble art of decorating and adding colour to our homes – or even more simply by chance, recalling Gustave Courbet's *L'atelier*, the painting that provides a manifesto of realism. *Wherever* is an exhibition lasting a single day, and it is a celebration or social celebration of 'cannoli' sweets in a Modica street. If we think back to a long time ago, artists didn't really hold actual shows as such, at least not as we think of them now, and often works were displayed individually or in small groups in public or private spaces. Every show was an event. With *Wherever*, I thought it would be suitable to put on the show in a street in the world as a single work-event. I was hinting before at the advice of my twin brother the decorator. He often loves to tell me that painters should only display their works in the provinces, in little towns where it's still possible to establish real contact with people. Painters in cities, says Michele, here in Italy caught up in the art system, are just ridiculous and often a source of prejudice on the part of specialists in the field, and so it's better to turn to people in small towns who, in his opinion, are able to understand and welcome the generosity of the painter in displaying paintings that may still say things about the condition of man and his destiny. On the other hand, prior to any other language, painting reached into people's lives. I, for example, have the image in mind of the Sacred Family with an olive branch that watched over my grandparents' bed, and which told me about the deeds of creative men. The painting I'm presenting here shows men in costume around a horse dressed up for a celebration, that of the 'cannoli'. This painting was conceived not so much for political reasons, although it is somewhat curious that I painted some Sicilian cannoli like so many holy spirits or aureoles above the heads of the masked men. Yet it reminds me of that splendid literary work by Max Ernst, *A Week of Kindness*, or the last novel by Don DeLillo, *Falling Man*: I was surprised by the fact that after the tragedy of the Twin Towers, in order to overcome the shock, many people started going to local leisure centres where they could follow all kinds of courses, play dominoes or table tennis, assist the elderly, etc. In the end, I thought, in a world that wants us all to be standardised, in times of danger or urgency of any kind, people still turn to one another, to the neighbourhood, and the neighbourhood becomes a micro-world or the only world of survival. And this micro-world may be found anywhere, in Modica or in the centre of New York. Or in Basle where during a contemporary art fair, I had the chance to take part in a neighbourhood celebration: fantastic! And so around a plate of fish, while talking to Corrado, and then travelling along country roads, listening to a CD of folklore songs, I came up with the idea for *Wherever*. I was surprised that someone like Ricardo Villalobos, who creates events in clubs all over the place, states that the time has come "to go back to melodies. We've had enough of a certain kind of minimalism. It's OK for monotony to have its moment within a set, but it should then give way to melodies, or at least to a different kind of rhythm. But we can't go on proposing sets that are not only monotonous but also boring." He goes on: "Rhythm is a universal language, while melodies belong to specific cultures." That's

why I told Corrado to stage this show. To address neighbourhood celebrations. To display a single and large-format 'familiar' painting. To hide local groups dressed up in period costumes playing pieces 'by heart' inside the houses, on the upper floors – at least at the start of the event, only to then set out through the celebrating streets – to distribute Sicilian cannoli and wine and other such hearty produce, and then to dance while both words and laughter pour forth. And so, a neighbourhood celebration designed to recreate something which has to do with all things human, with common understandings.

After training at the Academy of Fine Arts of Venice with Emilio Vedova and writing a dissertation on James Lee Byars, **Francesco Lauretta** moved to Turin. Here he began to display monumental works, white sculptures that verge on minimalism while still being evocative of a certain Baroque and narrative, olfactory spirit. He used green soap petals or black rose petals which he deposited on drawers, destabilising recognisable, everyday elements, like a sofa, a pedestal or a painting. He experimented with installation, performance and video, and in 2003 he began working on a redefinition of painting as a language and on that of the painter as an existential condition, exploring the techniques, processes, formal outcomes, deviations, limits and potential failures. Since 2010 he has been working on *I racconti funesti*: a series of allegories in which he deploys writing as a tool for the understanding of his research. He recently began a project on freedom and invention, including painting as the foundation of immense and possible worlds. Since October 2017, together with Luigi Presicce, he has been developing the 'Scuola di Santa Rosa': a free school of drawing, in Florence. His most recent solo shows, among the many held in galleries and institutional spaces, include: *The Battle*, Fondazione Rossini, Brioso MB (2018); *Due volte*, Galleria Giovanni Bonelli, Milan; *Inesistenze*, at the Galleria Zzo Zanin, Rome (2015); *Una nuova mostra di pittura*, in various historical venues in Scicli (2014); and *Esercizi di Equilibrio*, at the GAM Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Palermo (2013). Among his many group shows in Italy and abroad, we might recall *Walking on the Planet*, Casa Masaccio, San Giovanni Valdarno (2015), *PPS – Paesaggio e Popolo della Sicilia*, Palazzo Riso in Palermo and Frigoriferi Milanesi in Milan (2011), *Visions in New York City*, Macy Art Gallery, New York (2010), as well as his participation in special projects staged by collectives of artists and curators, including 'Racconto di Venti', Milan (2015); 'The Wall (archives)', Milan (2015); 'Nuvole', Scicli (2014); 'Madeinfilandia', Pieve a Presciano, Arezzo (2013); and 'La festa dei vivi (che riflettono sulla morte)', Porto San Cesario, Lecce (2013).