# Sette per Sette

a video-project by Roberto Gigliotti,
Angelika Burtscher and Daniele Lupo



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**Legal Disagreements**

"Sette per Sette" (seven by seven) is a footage shot in 2010 as a contribution to the "Legal Disagreements" exhibition, displayed in the Villa Romana in Florence and curated by Lorenza Luisa Corna and Matteo Cavalleri. Starting from the case of Florence and from the new administrative measures, the exhibition dealt with the issue of the governance of a city. Luisa Corna and Matteo Cavalleri's project springs from the observation that the regulations, born from the necessity to preserve the high value of the historical built heritage and applied by the municipality to the ancient core of the city – threatened by the tourist flows that daily pass across it and experiencing a clear process of gentrification – can be interpreted as an execution of control on the public sphere on the expenses of everyday life. In accordance to the possible gaps in the irregular mesh of the governance, the participants are asked to implement actions or subversive gestures, capable of emphasizing the incoherence and the paradox of the imposed measures. Our answer to this brief is a video that highlights the fact that the handling of a conflict and the virtuous administration of the *res publica* are possible only if each one of the involved parties is available to identify itself with the other ones.

**The reaction to the brief**

In this project the authors concentrate on the coral reading of the urban space, focussing the attention on phenomena like the urban marketing, and the irritation produced by the misuse of the public sphere. This becomes a scenario for commercial and promotional intrusions that have no other goal than implementing tourism and diffusing a stereotyped image of the city, in which a detachment occurs between the *sold* worlds and the *inhabited* ones, between the ordinary use by inhabitants and the extraordinary use by those who, like the tourist, are just passing through. After an inspection in Florence it was clear to the authors, that it was not possible to completely embrace the position of the curators: has a mayor emitting ordinances actually the final goal to exercise *control* on the public space? How invasive can the municipality management of the tourist flows be? Who are the inhabitants of a city and in how

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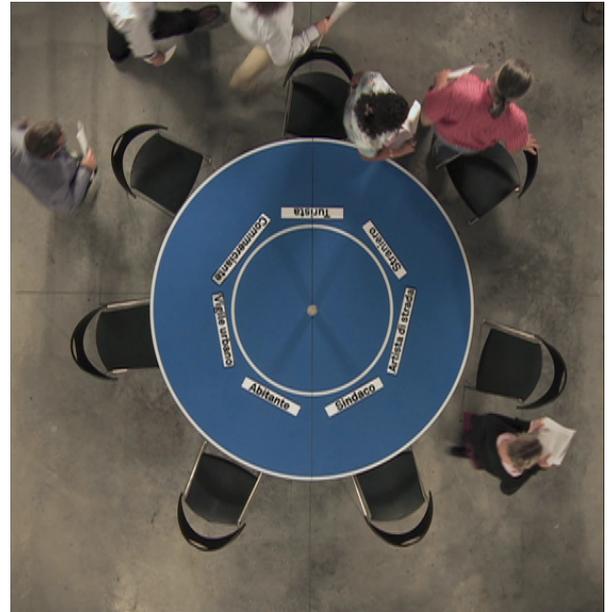


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many different groups are they subdivided? Is it possible to live in a museum? Which are the possible forms of coexistence between the *extra-ordinary* use of a city and its inhabitation? What are public order and safety (real or perceived) for those who are in the city? Trying to deal with these subjects we presented in Florence the video "Sette per Sette".

**A nameless city**
The project consists of a footage in which we simulate a negotiation board around which are assembled representatives of different categories of citizens. Their task is to reason about possible scenarios that could accommodate the points of view and the necessities of the groups they represent. A shopkeeper, an actress, an Ecuadorian

employee who has been living in Italy for many years, a politician, an employee and a designer are asked to sit around a table and to discuss. Each one plays a role, defined by the position he/she has around the table: mayor of a city, citizen, traffic officer, shopkeeper, tourist, stranger, street artist. The talk is not about Florence or, better said, the name of the city is never mentioned. The premises, the issues and the contents refer directly to the problems of the city in question but, so as to emphasize on the general merit of the topic handled, the city the participants are talking about remains nameless. The video is shot in a closed space and the image of the city is defined just by the words of the characters sitting around the table. After a few minutes the dialogue brakes off,

everybody stands up, changes place and is asked to empathize with a new character and start playing a new role. The discussion goes on. The process occurs seven times.

**Interpreting roles**
Every participant is asked to identify him-/herself in the assigned role basing on his/her personal experience and to defend those positions which, in his/her point of view, are of fundamental importance for the category he/she represents. The participants – who are not from Florence and received basic information about the starting point of the discussion before the shooting – are asked to face a discussion about issues dealing with the city and the administration of the public space.
The ones assembled around the ta-
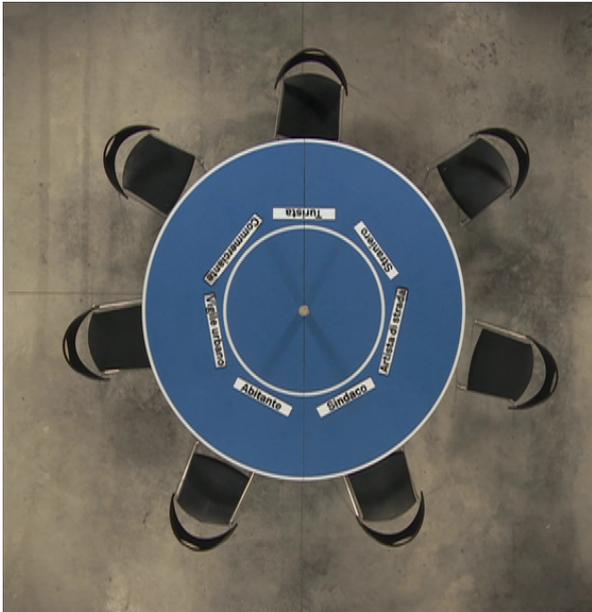
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ble are "actors" two times: they interpret a role and are active individuals in the life of their city, dealing with the same subjects always from a different perspective. The answers to the questions proposed by the curators of "Legal Disagreements" are in the production of a series of perceived scenarios of a city: Just by empathizing with the highest amount of roles – corresponding to different citizen categories – we can strive towards a virtuous administration of the urban structure.

For the curators, Florence assimilates the prohibition climate generated by the municipal administration: sometimes the citizen accept without questioning them the instruments that manage and, at the same time, control the territory – sometimes they even react in a more radical way than the ordi-

nances themselves would require. With this project we would like to contribute to a deeper analysis of the problem, highlighting the necessity of a strategic planning that should not aim just to the *obvious* solution of a problem but orientate itself to a management of the territory that takes into account the coral and simultaneous necessities of a complex urban structure.

**Seven discussions, seven scenarios**
From the comparison and the intersection between opinions, which are often contrasting, come out scenarios that describe the everyday life in the city. The plots that take shape are many-sided and complex: in some participants one can recognise a maintenance of the same position through the different interpreted roles; some others empa-

thize completely with the assigned character and take a stand oblivious of the previous interpreted roles. The issue related to the regulations and the position of those who are responsible for their application flows through the footage like a red thread. Although different mayors, declaring themselves ready to reduce the control of the administration on the public space, take turn with others who are keen on the adoption of strict surveillance measures, the conviction that a certain form of regulation is necessary permeates the video.

Furthermore, even if in different forms, in the seven discussions emerges the shared will to get hold of the city again. Someone hopes in a city given back to those who he/she calls *autochthonous* – with the help of a rigid application of

regulations that control the presence of *those who are not from here*; some others whish a welcoming city open to the inhabitants, the tourists and the strangers. Even the tourist perceives his/her position as a victim of the commodification to which the city is exposed and, in some cases, he/she expresses the discomfort of feeling like an undesired guest who – missing the presence of the inhabitants – would prefer to be welcomed in a livelier or more real place.

Regarding the tourist flows the positions change from the will to canalise them even more than already happens (arriving to the proposal of introducing an access tax to the city), to the request coming from the tourist him-/herself to be informed about other destinations, different from the traditional ones or to the demand of a civic education of all tourists. Indeed, the belief that the tourist represent a *dangerous other* predominates, while the perception of tourism as a shared resource is missing. The expression *museum*, used to describe a city rich of monuments as an open exhibition space (and this would represent a potential), recurs,w but a negative perception of the museum as a closed, inaccessible place prevails: a place where the things exhibited are enclosed in a display case, well positioned and at a security distance.
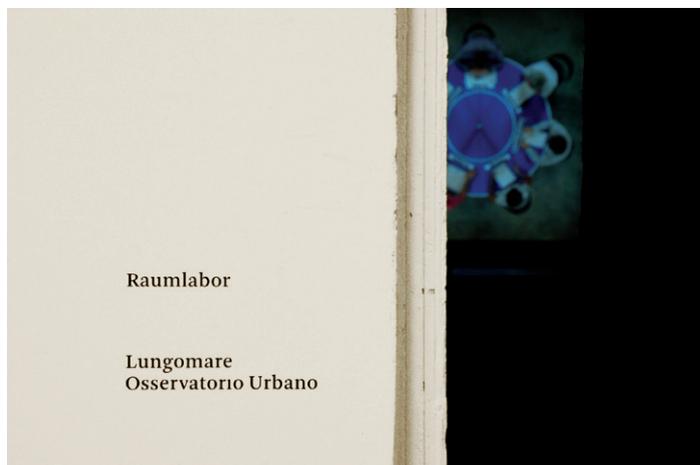


**Legal Disagreements**
26.09.-31.10.2010, Villa Romana, Firenze



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26.09.-31.10.2010, Villa Romana, Firenze

**Sette per Sette (2010)**
*a project by Lungomare, Bolzano*
*written and directed by: Roberto Gigliotti,*
*Angelika Burtscher, Daniele Lupo*
*cast: Curzio Castellan, Claudio Degasperi,*
*Riccardo Franchi, Gianpietro Gai, Andreas*
*Pichler, Teodora Lara Rivaderira, Monica*
*Trettel*
*Photography: Daniel Mahlknecht*
*Editing and Sound: Stefano Bernardi*

*http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lm3c39t5wlc*
*http://www.villaromana.org/front_content.php?idart=275*

*"Sette per Sette" was presented in Lungomare, Bolzano*
*on May 12, 2011*
*http://www.lungomare.org/pages/index.php?article_id=67&clang=2*