

But the South is moving towards the North

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Moving between observed and narrated reality, Kolar Aparna and Beatrice Catanzaro have created a project called YOU ARE BUT YOU ARE NOT for Lungomare. It brings together a year-long field research on the subject of borders, migration and hospitality with an experiment in cultural production. Kolar Aparna and Beatrice Catanzaro's project is of great relevance and its underlying reasons are events we come across every day, but the issues examined go far beyond the particular time and place of these events. They will not cease to be relevant tomorrow and will continue to pose a challenge. They will continue to be real.

YOU ARE BUT YOU ARE NOT takes shape in a border area, a border that has witnessed conflicts and that, in many people's imagination, is a door that opens into a world in which human rights are safeguarded and it is possible to make a new start. A door into a world that is less harmful and less dominated by fear. And yet, in reality, fear is stronger than the courage to live in a world of pluralism, and the desire to turn Europe into a fortress is increasingly seen by many as the only viable solution. *But the South is moving towards the North* – we are all on the move and we cannot stop. Giving in to the desire to stop would mean missing an opportunity for meeting and for learning from one another. The complex history of this land is one of negotiation and relationships between different cultures, and it is not the first time there has been talk here of learning from each other, finding out about each other and then living together. YOU ARE BUT YOU ARE NOT is built on the potential offered by this opportunity and it is a response to the daily challenges brought about by the flow of migrants towards and through Alto Adige.

At a time when images have gained the upper hand in the way we interact with the phenomenon of migration, Elena Pugliese has written for the work of Kolar Aparna and Beatrice Catanzaro YOU ARE BUT YOU ARE NOT an audio guide that takes us on an immersive journey into the public spaces of the city of Bolzano. In three chapters, entitled *the wait*, *the procedure* and *the orbit*, we are led by a narrator who tells a story of fragments of a whole range of different points of view. These alternate with other issues of a higher order, and we move along a clearly defined path that takes us from the railway station to the Rosegger park, opposite the police headquarters. An invisible line joins up the places that are significant in the stories of those who arrive in Bolzano after a long journey in search of new *horizons*, to quote a term from the track itself. These are stories that alternate with indications, connecting the everyday landscape with the emotional state of those who become refugees in Europe or “hosts” to those who have applied for refugee status.

The entire work questions the meaning of the word “hospitality”. What does “to host” mean? Who do we welcome into a land that we are used to considering our own? How many and what steps are needed to include the word “guest” in the story of a journey from one point to another on the Earth's crust, which is itself constantly moving?

The work is based on relationships and is the outcome of a constant search for interaction. The research phase that came before the creation of YOU ARE BUT YOU ARE NOT involved a whole series of meetings, conversations and work with many of those who deal on a daily basis with aspects of migration and hospitality. These were people involved personally, as representatives of voluntary agencies or institutions, or fired by civil courage, or because they themselves were migrants. Above all others, one underlying question was always present: “who is the Other?” The text talks of people in a reciprocal relationship of power, of exclusion and of inclusion, of affections and of languages. With this project, Kolar Aparna and Beatrice Catanzaro focus on a point of view that is common in the world of humanitarian policies: we exist, as do others, but it is necessary to create a “neutral” ground, a ground that is neither ours nor theirs, in which we can meet and enter into a relationship with each other. The project works on the

perception of personal identity, bringing it into question. In order to access this mutual ground, we are first of all invited to examine ourselves and where we are right now. Because we move in a suspended space, in an *orbit* that is not anchored to any fixed point. So the characters who are given a voice in the text are actors who, each in their own way – by helping, searching, travelling, waiting, translating – are involved in complex processes consisting of personal stories that intertwine with bureaucratic procedures. Summarily outlined, each of the characters *is but is not*, because the search for invisibility becomes a means of survival, aiming to fulfil the desire for an everyday life, even if the path to get there is fraught with obstacles.

Biographies and metaphors are the main elements around which the entire structure of the project revolves. Already in the research phase, the importance of telling the stories of personal experiences in migration processes became quite clear. These life experiences are told, transcribed and translated. In *YOU ARE BUT YOU ARE NOT* Kolar Aparna and Beatrice Catanzaro are not trying to focus on the ethnographic details of the “other”. In their work, the biographies intertwine, leaving overlapping traces. This means that the personal stories in the final work are not individual, but rather choral, resonating within the relational processes.

Reacting against the extreme politicisation of migration towards Europe, Kolar Aparna and Beatrice Catanzaro have attempted to outline contexts that speak of an everyday, personal and inter-subjective dimension, using metaphors rather than structures. They have done this in order to map the conversations in an open manner, so as to leave space for processes that can bring about both conceptual and procedural transformations. They used geological metaphors, such as the process of “metamorphosis” of rocks to tell of the inevitability of movements and transformations, but also of “hegemonic steps” to describe the legal and bureaucratic processes that asylum seekers are subjected to. Then there was the “in/visibility of borders”, from eyewitness accounts of people crossing the geopolitical borders of Europe and elsewhere, and of “collective narcissism” as a process of identification of one group at the expense of one that is excluded, as well as of “postcolonial torment”, as a reflection on the continuity of the history and transformation of relationships through the flows of migrants. For Kolar Aparna and Beatrice Catanzaro, this means encouraging reflections on the innermost emotional, relational and shared consequences of migration and hospitality, rather than simply trying to understand the bureaucratic procedures that currently govern migration and asylum applications in Europe.

YOU ARE BUT YOU ARE NOT accompanies us through places in the city of Bolzano, but it also tells us stories that take place elsewhere, and indeed everywhere. *YOU ARE BUT YOU ARE NOT* is an audio guide located on the border of Europe, consisting of meetings, trajectories and biographies of people who cross each other’s paths, echoing historical movements on scales that range from that of geology to that of the body. The border region in which *YOU ARE BUT YOU ARE NOT* is located is just one example that holds true for countless other places that have become impermeable. Places that allow neither events nor dreams, nor hopes, nor even lives to pass through them. Kolar Aparna and Beatrice Catanzaro’s work could easily be moved to such places, and the final sentence would always be the same: *If we don’t look into each other’s eyes, we will have nothing to say to each other.*