

## Stories in Transit V - Report from Marina Warner

October 16, 2018

Thanks to everyone, to the Giocherenda group and Clelia Bartoli, for their invaluable central support and activity throughout, to all the students – *arrivants* and others – who came and joined in, to all the *nessi* who joined us and worked so hard (See Appendix A for a list of bios). And to the marvellous helpers, Antonia Karaisl, Hannah Machover, Eduardo Balbo, Umberto Orlando, and Veronica Murella (their endless resourcefulness and cheerfulness made it all happen rather smoothly). Thanks also to the *insegnanti*, who have made it possible to gather together the students during term on school days and who helped us throughout by their presence. And above all to Valentina Castagna who does everything to organise the process, down to the smallest details, including the hospitality. She was wonderfully assisted by Maria Vaccaro who made the coffee breaks delicious, and Shapoor and the staff of Moltivolti, where we ate together at lunch and at dinner several times.

The political change of government in Italy and the rise of the right-wing Interior Minister Matteo Salvini have exacerbated the difficulties of all refugees, but the mayors of Palermo and Naples, as well as other officials, oppose the new policy of hostility. Tensions have nevertheless risen; the ports were ordered to close to NGO rescue boats, and there have been some unpleasant incidents of harassment by vigilantes from the north. But these problems did not make themselves felt over our four days – rather the contrary; interactions between the refugee community and the local people were overall very positive, even at times joyous.

During Stories in Transit V, we all worked together, as planned, towards presenting three stories adopting three different media/genres:

Numu Touray's *Uno per te e uno per me* (One for You and One for me) with puppets;

Amadou Diallo's *Il Vecchio e il serpente : La storia del genio di Palermo* (The Old Man and the Serpent: The Story of the Genius of Palermo) with traditional *cantastorie* painted story board banner;

Dine Diallo's *Il Cacciatore e il Figlio del Re* (The Huntsman and the King's Son), animation film, in combination with live action drama.

The four days were packed, fast, intense; the rhythm of each day, as we all worked towards the performances on Saturday afternoon, was syncopated and at times confusing, but on the whole, the students and the *nessi* found their roles and clusters developed well around certain methods, including music-making. In some ways, I thought our separate movements within the collective body, resembled the action of water, which finds its best direction and carves its own channel to run through. This image feels satisfying because the Arabic conjunction of meanings between narration and irrigation, as expressed by the root *raawa*, has always provided Stories in Action with its underlying motive.

*Wednesday, 26th September 2018*

We gathered at Moltivolti: around 50-55, perhaps more, young people joined us there. Many more young women than last time took part from the start. This was a new development; they were mostly Christians from Nigeria, including Vicky, Happy, Mary, Juliet and Ella. They made a very strong, lively contribution and stuck with the whole process and seemed genuinely to enjoy it.

We grouped according to the colours on ribbons, which gave a sort of structure to the crowd, but very haphazardly, and then, led by Dine Diallo and others from Giocherenda (Maga and Amadou), we set out at intervals by three different routes, which Hannah had mapped and drawn, colour coded. This was extremely helpful even though we did not manage to keep exactly to the plans or indeed cover the whole route in the time we had. It meant that we weren't one central mass of people.

Spike suggested making a view-finder – a window cut in a sheet of paper – to frame details or scenes. This was rather popular as a device though not perhaps directly used later (needs three hands if drawing at the same time!)

*Photo: Nicola Chemotti*

This walk was however a marvellous success: the young people set about drawing and noting down their observations with a zest and fearlessness that was wonderful; some of them protested they did not know how to draw and even never had done, but their inhibitions soon faded and they began.

The drawings included all kinds of details of the Palermitan scene – from their own mobile phones, to the graffiti and the official signage, cars, laundry, etc. Some of their observations returned in the song, *Ciuri ciuri*, the folk song then added to by Lucina and the students.

On the way, we went into the Palazzo Pretorio to see the statue of the Genio there: this was a very remarkable moment, first because the guards did not turn a hair at the large number of refugees coming into this official building and then because Lucina Lanzara, the music teacher from Palermo, began singing to her guitar in the courtyard – she has a huge voice and terrific brio, it was exciting to hear her. That sculpture of the Genio is rather fine and much less damaged than the one in the Vucciria, in Piazza Garaffo (which we visited in May), and the young people were interested in it, and took note which bore fruit later.

We also went by Piazza Rivoluzione and saw the Genio there on the fountain, where he is looking up to heaven in hope, it seems.

After the walk, we all joined up again at the Museo delle Marionette and had lunch. Then Numu, Amadou and Dine all told us their stories – in Italian, partly with translation. Amadou and Dine are both members of Giocherenda, and several others from that group worked with us over the course of the workshop.

Numu's story led to a lively discussion, spontaneously from the audience, after he asked us who was to blame for the disaster that overtook the village. Alpha pitched in with his view, that the authorities were to blame for setting up an unjust law.

Others disagreed, blaming the thieves. Ella commented, "They should steal quietly!" -while Vicky fingered the watchman: "He didn't do his job" – Vicky]. We put it to the vote:

The verdict was that the authorities were to blame because they take the decisions on behalf of their people and should have verified what was really going on in the cemetery. This was a strong example of experience informing the storytelling, and giving the participants a way of speaking up about what they have been through.

Afterwards, the two puppeteers or *pupari* demonstrated the use of the traditional Palermitan Orlando and Angelica, and the beheading of the monster (always a hit). They were an inspiration throughout, wonderfully enthusiastic and helpful. They later brought two 'lowlife' characters who became the thieves in *One for You and One for Me*, and another, venerable, turbaned figure, who became the Headman of the village.

Late that afternoon, we divided into groups, again trying to keep to coloured ribbons and began exploring how to interpret the stories. We also built on the suggestion of Yousif, the storyteller, that we explore the sights of Palermo the students had noticed on the walk and see what associations they might have for them with previous experiences or imaginings.

My group included Lucina, the puparo Gi Cuticchio, and Matthew Reynolds. We worked with several students, including Alpha, exploring the story of the Genio, the character of the old man and the characteristics of the snake. This was quite lively, given that we were working in a mixture of languages. We came up with names for them: Baba and Scisci.

(These were later inscribed into the cartellone roundels.)

The puparo Gi revealed that in Sicily there is a species of snake that lives near water – ponds and streams – and that farmers use them to find new water sources. They are dowsers! This association with water led to a new episode in the original story as devised by Amadou: that the serpent carried the Vecchio across the sea, like a Loch Ness monster.

We also collected some observations from the walk, and this was fruitful and led to the ‘rap’ list which Lucina incorporated into a local folk song, ‘Ciuri ciuri...’ (see Appendix B) which became the refrain of the rousing chorus that closed the performances, in the Giardini Garibaldi and the puppet Museum on Saturday.

The day closed with a performance of a blessing by Marta as Santa Rosalia and Maga as San Benedetto il Moro, which Clelia has choreographed. They took to the stage and danced a sequence of salutations, gentle, courteous and loving... it was profoundly affecting.

We all then followed after, and the feeling these gestures generated really was very powerful. It would have been wonderful to introduce this into our ‘spettacolo’ as a closing ritual, but unfortunately there wasn’t time.

#### *Thursday 27 September*

We assembled at Santa Chiara, rather raggedly and confusingly, students arriving rather slowly. It was very difficult to get started, but eventually we made a circle in the courtyard and did some of the warm-up exercises Mercedes had planned: giving our names (‘I am X and this is my good friend X’, as one puts an arm round one’s neighbour), passing the squeeze, passing the clap, and an attempt at the *Geographical Fugue*, calling out place names. (This could be developed for a later performance, I hope.)

We were perhaps a bit too numerous for these games in a single circle – it was a bit slow, but on the whole achieved the aim of establishing a friendly atmosphere.

We then separated again into groups:

– Animation at one table (Huntsman story and the interpolated tales he tells the guards taking him off to prison) This is a very complex and painstaking process, requiring drawing, narrative structure, dialogue, as well as the technical elements. Dine was very active here. Amadou Sakho (as opposed to Amadou Diallo, who created the Genio story) took part very productively, showing a real talent.

Joan and Lee were principal nessi here, with lots of work with Phil, Selma, Roger and Mary.

– Painting in the area to the back of the room (the storyboard banner for Genio and props) Lots of the young women and several others, some of them (not so young) men from Pakistan who spoke only Urdu (Imran, Mubashir, Fayyaz), but communications were somehow happening, and they worked with a will, and were very exact (they like ruling lines) and keen to take part in every way. Spike, Rosy, Nicola and Tota led the way.

– Puppetry and masks on one table (for One for You) There were also marvellous puppets made for the story of the Baby, the snake and the cat, which Numu started making. They later went through many hands! They were not used in the end, sadly – see below). Marcia and Wafa were chiefly involved here.

– Music in groups here and there – courtyard, stage, upstairs room, led by Jem. Nearer the end of the day, Kemo, Alpha, Jem and Hannah worked together on a lullaby (written by Alpha), which didn't get into the final performance but was a promising moment of musical collaboration.

All the nessi contributed at maximum intensity to bringing in the students and fostering their inclinations and encouraging them! There was a feeling of urgency, of lack of time, but on the whole the mood grew enthusiastic and many young people joined in with alacrity and stayed the course and showed inspiration and gifts at different, needed skills.

Trying to convey how they might take part and holding their attention seem to me the most difficult part of the process but the ideas took hold and caught fire in a good way.

The Metabolic Studio arrived and joined us for dinner that evening – Lauren Bon, Rich Nielsen, Roxanne Steinberg, and Emily who was set to film and archive the workshop the following days and the performances.

**Stevie (Wishart) also arrived.**

*Friday 28 September*

We began in a similar way, and then divided up again and continued.

Jem, Stevie and Hannah worked on the music – Foley effects mainly, using guitar, violin (Stevie bought new strings), and other sounds (bells, balloons, and found materials). Stevie worked mainly with Epiphany, Ghislain and Victoria [not Vicky, but another woman who performed, with the violin, in all three stories].

We were joined by Adam (Hayes), who quickly established a group of drummers who accompanied the run-throughs we held in the afternoon. He worked with three young men; Bouba, Mbembe and Ibrahim. This group came about fairly organically, based around the number of djembe drums available. They were focussed, easy to work with and also extremely talented (especially Ibrahim, a superb drummer, according to Adam).

We added a fourth table for painting signs and props. Among participants that day were Joy and Gift, inseparable young ‘sisters’ from Nigeria, who drew and coloured in intertitles for *One for You* very meticulously.

Mubashir and his friends also became a group who neatly made some more intertitles, measuring out space on the material to fit all the letters in perfectly.

A large placard of the Genio took shape... many hands involved, but principally Imran dominated, working again very carefully. We drew on photos on their phones and the drawings from the May maps.

Ansel Krut who had come with Metabolic Studio joined us and Rich Nielsen started working on the mango tree, students making leaves and fruit for it. The mango template, interestingly enough, was provided by one of the maps from the walk in May.

After lunch, the run-throughs of the Numu and Genio stories inspired a spontaneous outburst of dancing from the performers, prop carriers etc. in the courtyard.

*Saturday 29 September*

The day of the performances!

We were very under-rehearsed and unprepared, but the results were exciting nevertheless.

We picked up all the masks, costumes, instruments, props, puppets etc. and walked to the Piazza Marina, distributing leaflets along the way.

At the time of the performances, a small crowd – about 30-40 strong – had assembled, and the sight lines were such that anything larger couldn't have had a good view, especially on the puppet action. The huge, 100-year old ficus tree in the Giardino Garibaldi could not have provided a better backdrop for the two plays performed there, *One for You, One for Me* and *Il Genio di Palermo*. The third performance, which included animated scenes, took place in the Puppet museum.

There was panic at the last moment because several of the actors, players who had rehearsed in the morning did not come (the unpredictability of attendance has been a factor from the beginning-Lucina says this is always the case), but replacements were found. In the case of the Religious Leader, the new actor was rather inspired, and did a good act of being too sleepy to be bothered with the Watchman's troubles. The actor who performed the cemetery keeper, Mohammed, was very expressive both in the way he handled the puppet and the way he used his body and facial expressions.

*One for You* worked really well – the puppet thieves stealing mangos from the tree were handled convincingly by two young men, the splendid puppet ghosts in the cemetery entered with lusty whoops and flutterings, and the discussion with the audience was again lively, and provoked detailed responses, including from Vicky who, unprompted, challenged Alpha's confident exposition and opinions.

The story of the Genio followed – Amadou having arrived at top speed on his bike just in time (from some work he had that afternoon).

There were steps in the story that were blurred or missed altogether, because the original serpent-puppeteer hadn't come back, and his replacement, Siddiquir [from Bangladesh],

didn't quite effect the transformation from old and tired to young, vigorous and colourful at the right moment; he also failed to 'kiss' the Vecchio after he had eaten the fruit of eternal youth.

The Huntsman story took place afterwards in the Puppet Museum. Due to the venue being occupied earlier in the week, this was the least rehearsed play, much to Mercedes' chagrin, but thanks to the inventiveness and quite inspired improvisation of the actors during the actual performance, it turned out a big success. It was decided that the film animation sequences would tell the two fables interpolated in the main plot, while this story would unfold in live action. Dine unfolded the story, and scenes were enacted, in costume, by many students and many nessi, girls and boys, including Juliet, Vicky, Amadou (Sakho), Antonia and Mary. The horned mask of the gazelle matched the backdrop of the Enchanted Forest as if made with it in mind; this scenery was painted by Renato Guttuso for Italo Calvino's play, which had originally, many years ago, prompted me to think that new puppet plays could be made to speak to our times!

The drawings and the music for the animation were poetic and really rather wonderful, especially the cat and baby sequence and the lullaby which Jem worked on. This time, there were subtle transparencies used, not only silhouette cut outs.

Dine closed with an authoritative account of the story's ethical message to leaders: not to rush to judgement, not to act violently.

We sang the *Ciuri Ciuri* song and the reception was loud and rapturous.

Both venues provided a truly enthralling setting: the great ficus or banyan trees in the Giardino Garibaldi of Piazza Marina created a magnificent dramatic, architectural stage, and *One for You* and the *Genio* stories fitted perfectly into alcoves made by the great trunk of one of these ancient marvels, with their aerial roots like gothic pillars. It was very difficult to get permission to play in public there, and Valentina had to make repeated attempts, involving frustrating effort, before a half-go ahead came from the Mayor's office. We did not want to involve the refugees/asylum seekers (some of whom are perhaps without papers or 'clandestini') in any trouble with police.



The museum's upstairs room has an unrivalled atmosphere and treating it as a pit rather than a proscenium worked very well. The play was funny and charming and Dine carried off the long narration with great authority.

Both events were received – and performed – with enthusiasm and showed what can be achieved in a very compressed space of time. Valentina did a tremendous job of translating back and forth at several key moments.

Also, more importantly, these three stories lend themselves to further development and I hope Numu, Amadou and Dine can try and do this for further shows, on their own, and towards the Hayward exhibition.

Monica Campo, a member of the staff at the Puppet Museum, has asked us for all the props etc. and wants to display them.

**Since then Rosario Perricone, the director of the Museum, has written, apologising for not being there, and offering to put on the performances again since he heard excellent reports of them.**

***THIS IS A VERY STRONG AND PROMISING DEVELOPMENT. I think some nessi need to return to rehearse the three stories closely. WHO MIGHT BE FREE AND ABLE TO DO THIS BEFORE CHRISTMAS?***

***I suggest clusters of two or three nessi, in different spheres (music, theatre, writing) for two days only, perhaps going to the hostel or to the school.***

Favourite moments of mine:

Seeing the bird with an eye in its wing, graffiti'd on a wall

Coming across this poem, just past the Discesa dei Giudici:

Resta, Goditi

Lo spettacolo

Resta coraggiosa

Resta dolce

Testa alta

CUORE IN MANO

Propaganda poetica

[Signed? ] Segni Baida Ovunque Vai

*Photo: Nicola Chemotti*

And another: 'Non si vede bene che col cuore  
L'essenziale e invisibile agli occhi' (From *Le Petit Prince*)

*Photo: Nicola Chemotti*

A woman regarding us from her basso, leaning over the half door as several studenti stopped in the street outside to draw.

The blaze of colour from the flames and flowers in the props. The dance that erupted in the courtyard of Santa Chiara.

To think on:

Yousif tried to direct Amadou, but he was a bit resistant, as was Dine to Mercedes's suggestions.

We didn't do enough with words - nonsense chains for songs and other mixing and matching we did before.

We didn't review and discuss and unfold the drawings and notes the participants had made on the walk and take them further, except by including some in the song. Can we ask the teachers to develop this? We are going to scan the pages so there are copies which can be circulated and used, multiply.

In the following some extracts from the reports and comments sent in by the *nessi* after the event (the full reports and comments can be found in the appendix):

*"The most amazing thing was the way the students had really engaged with the whole project of stories and storytelling - and throwing things into the casserole - the way their own stories and experiences have become so much a central part of it all."* (Philip Terry)

*"I'm getting very very fond of all the Palermo teachers and these remarkable young men with such dignity. Every single one of the Nessi were devoted and talented and none had egos which was such a joy to work with. I think it was the best performances until now"* (Wafa Tarnowska)

*"I think SiT V was the best workshop we have run with students so far, this might be due to the fact that we have now developed some strategies and are sufficiently trained to deal with some of the problems, although some difficulties in managing the students' presence remain. However, I had the impression that many of the students who were there were particularly active and engaged in the work."* (Valentina Castagna)

*"I have made some suggestions for future in my notes which I will send soon. A good editing system would make a huge difference. ...All in all we did make progress but trying to place it within a performance needs much more thinking about." (Joan Ashworth)*

*"Palermo was great I thought - there was an impressive sense of focus and determination on everyone's part, as well as creativity and warmth. I was very pleased to be so sucked in and feel useful. My one thought was that it would be good to try to do something with the African languages the young people bring, as well as with their stories" (Matthew Reynolds)*

*"I was particularly impressed that so many young women were involved, and how engaged they were. This is a triumph, compared to last time. I wonder if we might be able to do some more to facilitate a sense of esprit the corps, a feeling of joined purpose. ...I crave a somewhat stronger framework for the work, something that could offer more support to the young people whilst allowing them to take ownership of their stories and their artworks." (Mercedes Kemp)*

*"One other small but interesting sidelight came from the young Bangladeshi [Siddiqur] who managed to enthrall some of us with his tricks with numbers and mind games. This was such a simple and effortless way of communication and what stood out for me was that he was the person who initiated the dialogue and wove the spells. ... Again I feel this is the way integration should move forward; as a two-way rather than a one-way street. I was also excited by the way Din managed the staging of his very complicated story. He led the way, and the nessi became onlookers or bit-actors under his direction. ...Traffic was flowing freely and fast down the two-way street." (Mary Venturini)*

*"The workshop also reinforced in my mind the importance of the creative process. Even in the 2 days of workshop that I participated in, I could see a marked difference in the confidence in the refugees, especially by the time they were on stage performing. I was extremely impressed with the whole Stories in Transit experience. There was a strong sense of chaos but I was amazed at how quickly everything pulled together and became more clear." (Adam Hayes)*

*"There was no tension in the group of nesis. Everyone was kind, helpful and supportive of what the others were doing. I really think that an exceptional aspect of the SiT Project as a whole is the way that it brings people of multiple disciplines and ages together. This is inspiring for us, as participants, not just in terms of our own interests and ideals, but also in providing some solace in meeting like-minded artists in these bleak times." (Selma Dabbagh)*

*"Both of us were moved by the generosity and the strong network of affection and care we experienced at Santa Chiara, and by how organically things has evolved - given the short time we had. We were all able to create a positive environment which facilitated engagement and participation and the students really enjoyed that. They were legitimised to choose the activities they wanted to do and to explore various tasks and media. Many came to us at the end of the play to thank and kiss us." (Nicola Chemotti and Tota Pingaro)*

Epilogue

On my return from Palermo and the intensity of the involvement there, I felt rather homesick and disoriented, not just for the colour and vitality of everyone, but for something else, and I realise that it was a sense of being needed. all together to help make the performances take shape, each of us was needed. This is an illusion, perhaps, but it is a powerful one and not unpleasant.

Since we came back to London, the situation in Italy has worsened, with the house arrest and charges brought against Mimmo Lucano, the far-sighted mayor of Riace, whose policies of integration and cooperation have transformed a blighted southern town into a lively community, keeping the kindergarten open, organising rubbish collection etc. He has now been released but ordered to leave Riace, and the refugees in Riace might be deported to the North of Italy in a couple of months. The rules for residence permits are also being revised, and the periods allowed are being curtailed. For example, we were hoping that a small community from a dreadful part of outer Palermo, Bellolampo, where the city dumps its rubbish, would be joining us for the workshop, but their teacher cancelled at the last moment because he had news that the kind of hostel they are living in is to be abolished as two year permits are not to be extended to four years any longer.

I recently heard the poet Daljit Nagra reflecting on Loneliness in a radio programme on that subject. He said that with writing ‘There is you and there are other yous...’ and that the process of making something on the page can help dispel this loneliness so prevalent in the contemporary world. He went on, ‘If you’re lonely, you’re looking for connections.’ I think these thoughts apply to the attempts of Stories in Transit to make stories come alive together, between people who find themselves in a certain place at a certain time and are surviving in an uncertain present facing an uncertain future.

## APPENDIX

### **Appendix A: List of Nessi bios**

**Joan Ashworth** is a director and designer of animated films. She has worked in industry and academe for 28 years, directing commercials, title sequences and short films and conducting research. From 1994- 2015, Joan was the Head of the internationally renowned Animation Dept. at the Royal College of Art, London. She lectures internationally on Animation and Visual Writing. Ashworth is currently in production of a film on suffragette and artist, Sylvia Pankhurst. She is also engaged with research into animation and health advising on

how animation can be a valuable tool in exploring real world issues.

**Clelia Bartoli** is the coordinator of the educational experimentation "Polipolis" at the "CPIA - Palermo 1", dedicated to unaccompanied foreign minors. A Lecturer in Human Rights at the Department of Legal Sciences of the University of Palermo, she has served as an expert at the Italian Ministry of Integration. Responsible for Italy for the "Heroic Imagination Project", a programme of education to resilience conceived by Philip Zimbardo and indicated by the Ashoka Foundation as one of the most innovative educational interventions in Italy (2016). Her books include: *Legal clinics in Europe. For a commitment of higher education in social justice* (2016); *Razzisti per legge. L'Italia che discrimina* (Laterza, 2012); *La teoria della subalternità e il caso dei dalit in India* (Rubettino: 2008). She has edited *Women Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Sicily* (DuePunti editore, 2010) and *Sull'universalità dei diritti umani* (Firenze University Press, 2003).

**Valentina Castagna** is a research fellow in English literature at the Department of Humanities of the University of Palermo. She has published books and articles in the field of Women's Studies and Gender Studies, on popular genres and rewriting, on the contemporary novelist Michèle Roberts and on Margery Kempe's autobiography. She edited and translated into Italian the radioplay *La cella di Brigit* (Palermo, Quattrosoli, 2010) by Marina Warner and the short story collection "*Limiti Naturali*" e altre storie by the same author (Naples, Liguori, 2014).

**Nicola Chemotti** is a Designer at Thames & Hudson. He is one of the organisers of Evening Class, a self-organised learning environment where participants can cultivate common interests, develop research and collectively decide the class's programme from their space in Aberfeldy Street, Poplar. He was in Rovereto, Italy and studied Conservation of Cultural Heritage at Trento University. He went on to study at the Faculty of Design and Art in Bolzano, Italy. He was trained as a designer in NYC, Jerusalem and London. In Jerusalem he worked as print designer on screen-printing and book design projects. His work has been exhibited at Museion, Museum for Contemporary Art in Bolzano and at The Israeli Museum in Jerusalem, among others. In 2015 he was selected to present his project Rachla at a design panel at The New School, Parsons School of Design, in NYC.

**Selma Dabbagh** is a British Palestinian writer of fiction. Her first novel, *Out of It*, (Bloomsbury), set between Gaza, London and the Gulf, was a *Guardian Book of the Year* in 2011 and 2012. The Publications that have anthologised her short stories include *Granta*, *the British Council*, *Wasafiri* and *Al Saqi*. In 2014, her play, '*The Brick*,' was produced by BBC Radio 4 and nominated for an Imison Award. She regularly writes for *The Electronic Intifada* on Palestinian culture and has written for *The Guardian*, *The London Review of Books*, *GQ* and other publications. Selma is also a qualified solicitor, who holds a masters in law (LLM) from London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Her masters dissertation focussed on refugee law as it is applied to Palestinians. She has worked for human rights NGOs in East Jerusalem, Cairo and London. As a solicitor she has specialised in civil actions against the police, employment law and regulatory telecommunications law (in Bahrain). Since 2010 she has been a legal consultant for Hickman and Rose solicitors, working on international criminal law cases, including the Gaza Flotilla case. She has also been the project manager for the No Safe Haven project Legal Action Worldwide (LAW).  
www.selmadabbagh.com

**Jem Finer** is an artist, composer and musician with a background in mathematics and computer science, dating back to the ICL 1900 mainframe computers of the early 1970s. An enduring fascination with deep time and space, self-organising systems and long-duration processes has been the impetus behind much of his work including his Artangel commission, *Longplayer*, a thousand-year-long musical composition playing since the last moments of 1999, *Cosmolog*, a two-year-long artists residency in the astrophysics department of Oxford University and the 2005 PRSF New Music Award winner, *Score For a Hole In the Ground*, a permanent, self-sustaining musical installation in a forest in Kent, which relies only on gravity and the elements to be audible. His sculpture *Supercomputer* is currently located at Trinity Buoy Wharf. It is a sculpture of a mathematical process in which the flow of ball bearings, carrying information through labyrinthine circuits of mechanical computational units, calculates microminimal melodic phrases.

**Marcia Farquhar** is an artist working in performance, photography, painting and object-making. Her site-specific works have been staged and exhibited internationally in museums and galleries, as well as in lecture theatres, kitchen showrooms, hotels, pubs, parks and leisure centres.

Farquhar's performances are conceptual in nature and often precariously balanced between the prescribed and the unpredictable – socially open, broadly embracing of circumstance, and resolutely focussed in the live and unrepeatable moment. They have also made frequent and subversive use of popular cultural forms such as TV cookery, pop-psychology, the Punch & Judy show, the fashion catwalk and the guided tour.

Farquhar was born in London where she lives and works. She is currently exhibiting at the CGP London gallery. This 'non-survey' exhibition *Difficult* (13 September – 28 October) spans work over Marcia's career, reimagining work such as *Marcia Farquhar's 12 Shooters* (2009), a 192-page document of her collaboration with 14 artist-filmmakers, into a new series of short videos with 16 artist-filmmakers.

**Spike Gascoigne** is an artist and printmaker. He set up Walden Press in 2013, whose works range from the satirical to the mystical, figurative to abstract, informative to the absurd. Walden Press has exhibited at numerous print and publishing fairs across the UK including DIY Cultures and Small Publishers Fair. Spike also teaches printmaking at the University of Hertfordshire.

**Letizia Gullo** is a filmmaker based in Milan, currently working in Research and Storytelling for Vice Italia / Google UK. She has worked on various film projects, including being Assistant Director Assistant director and sound engineer for the film *ISOLA* by Fabianny Deschamps (June 2015 - October 2015) and Director of *Mare Magnum* (74', France 2014), a documentary about the municipal elections of Lampedusa in 2012. Gullo co-authored the documentary project "Il pane di san Giuseppe" by Stefano Savona, an archive of memory with 150 life stories of old Sicilian farmers, funded by the Film Commission of the Sicilian Region.

**Adam Hayes** is a professional freelance drummer, who also regularly performs on cajon, udu, and various other percussion instruments. He has toured and recorded with artists from across the UK and beyond, and is currently working with Unexpected Guests, Emmet Scanlan and Victor Vox.

**Mercedes Kemp** is a theatre practitioner and lecturer. She is the Associate Director of Community and Research for WildWorks and Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Falmouth University. Mercedes was born and grew up in Southern Spain. For the past thirty years she has lived in West Cornwall. Since 2001 she has worked in close collaboration with Bill Mitchell, developing storylines and text for site specific pieces in Malta, Cyprus, France, Belgium, the Occupied Territories of Palestine and Britain. She is a core member of WildWorks. As well as the production of text and story line, her role within WildWorks involves creating and maintaining relationships with host communities, exploring their relationships with place and memory and adapting text to fit each new location. Her method involves a kind of eclectic ethnographic research into a variety of sources: archives, libraries, cemeteries, village halls, bus stops, local historians, town gossips, snapshots, old photographs, conversations, and, above all, a close observation of the process of memory and its effect on the value that people place on their environments.

**Ansel Krut** is a painter who lives and works in London. Born in South Africa, Ansel Krut graduated with an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art in 1986, after which he was awarded the Abbey Major scholarship to the British School in Rome. He attended the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (1982-1983), and completed his BA in Fine Art at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (1979-1982). Krut's technique is to construct the surfaces of his canvases with layers of colourful paint. There is a strong relationship to the structure of drawing and use of flattened pictorial space. Each canvas carries a particular and spirited character: fans, vortices, geometric angles, dynamic and judiciously suggestive organic shapes recur throughout his compositions, revealing an abstracted, abject portraiture. In an interview with *It's Nice That*, he said that 'Politicians should draw more. So should curators. I used to work at the National Gallery, and I kept saying that the curators should draw because it's only by drawing that you get a different kind of insight. Drawing is a parallel language in a way.'

**Roger Malbert** is an artist, writer and curator. He studied philosophy, then illustration, after which he was Assistant Curator at Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (1974-79). He then returned to art school and has an MFA in drawing from the University of British Columbia. He was the Head of Hayward Gallery Touring (2000-2018), where he organised and co-curated many exhibitions. He is the author of *Drawing People: The Human Figure in Contemporary Art*, published by Thames & Hudson in 2015. He has been a judge for the Jerwood Drawing Prize, and his writing on art has featured in the *Independent*, *Art Monthly*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, *The Art Newspaper* and *Modern Painters*.

**Elvira Rose Oddy** is an artist living and working in London. She studied History of Art with Philosophy at UCL and Painting at Winchester School of Art. She completed her post-graduate scholarship place at The Royal Drawing School in 2015, where she now teaches on the Young Artist programme. Shows include The Lyn Painter Stainer Prize, The Contemporary Watercolour Prize and the Summer Exhibition at The Royal Academy London. A love of nature and the experience of place is important in her drawing. She tries to capture the universal in the particular and is interested in communicating a certain exhilaration found in everyday experience. Concerns of space, thresholds and microcosms recur in her work. She has a love of wild places but is also interested in liminal spaces and the juxtaposition of the man-made with the natural.

**Matthew Reynolds** is a writer and academic. He is Professor of English and Comparative Criticism and Tutorial Fellow at St Anne's College, Oxford. His research and writing is particularly concerned with how literature germinates between and crosses languages; in translation as a creative process, especially as it involves Italian, French, the classics and the many languages of English; in the grounds and purposes of literary criticism; in writing about visual art; and in the practice of fiction. He writes that he is 'most at home in the 19th & 20th & 21st centuries but my work has ranged back as far as the early modern period.' He initiated and chairs Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation (OCCT), the interdisciplinary research programme based in TORCH and St Anne's College. Recent publications and papers include *Translation: A Very Short Introduction* for OUP (October 2016), the chapter, 'Monuments: A Short Story about Form, Language and Translation', in *Other Literature*, edited by Jorge Mendez Blake (2016). Ongoing projects include *Minding Borders: Resilient Divisions in Literature, the Body and the Academy* (co-edited; forthcoming) and *Prismatic Translation*, an ongoing research project which is now AHRC-funded (two volumes are in preparation, one co-edited with Sowon Park, the other with Adriana Jacobs).

**Lee Shearman** is an arts educator, freelance illustrator and designer based in St. Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex. He co-founded the art collective Borbonesa and runs a small-press publishing platform Micro Library Books. He is an experienced Artist Facilitator working in partnership with schools, colleges and cultural organisations in the South East region to provide creative learning opportunities in the form of short courses, workshops and participatory events for learners of all ages. Partners include University Arts London, Charleston Trust, De La Warr Pavilion, Barbican, Southbank, Hastings & Rother Artist Education Network, Brighton Dome and others.

**Wafa' Tarnowska** was born in Lebanon and is a published children's writer, translator and story teller. She has written 5 children's books in English, has translated dozens of stories from English into Arabic and 4 plays from Arabic to English for the Royal Court theatre in London. She currently lives in the UK after having worked in Australia, Lebanon, India, Poland, Cyprus and the UAE. She is also a public speaker and a champion of environmental sustainability and gender diversity. She is a non-executive board member of Women4Sustainable Growth and sits on the Mosaic Regional Leadership team in Yorkshire.  
www.wafatarnowska.co.uk

**Philip Terry** is currently Director of the Centre for Creative Writing at the University of Essex. His novel *tapestry* was shortlisted for the 2013 Goldsmith's Prize. *Dante's Inferno*, which relocates Dante's action to current day Essex, was published in 2014, as well as a translation of Georges Perec's *I Remember*. He is currently working on a version of *Gilgamesh* in "Globish", a 1,500 word international business language.

**Mary Wilsey Venturini** is the former editor of *Wanted in Rome* (<https://www.wantedinrome.com/>). She recently gave a talk at the Keats-Shelley House at Piazza di Spagna about her time volunteering at a refugee

centre in the province of Ragusa, Sicily. The talk titled ‘Mediterranean Migration: From Ithaca to Pozzallo’ can be found on the Dropbox, folder, [here](#)

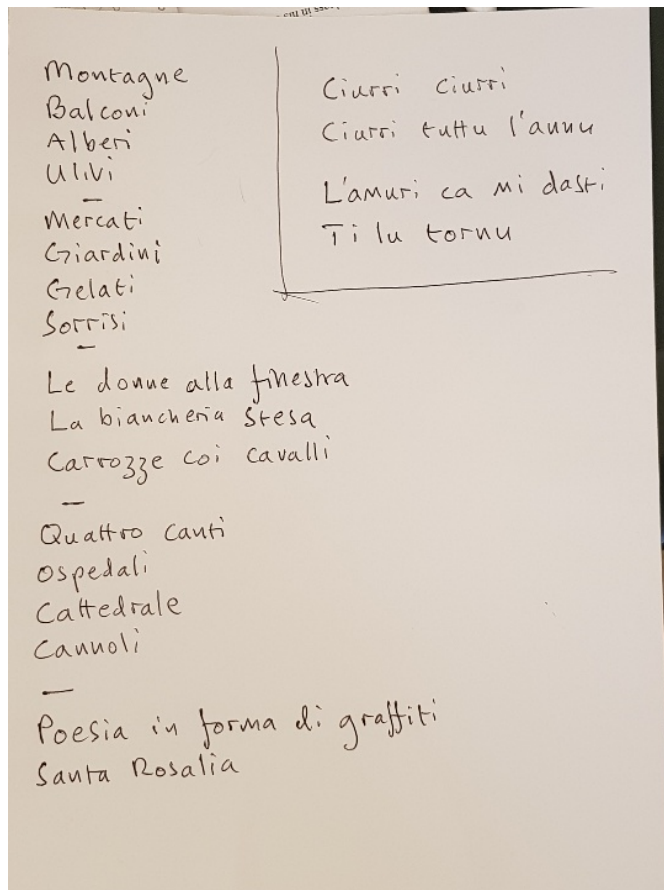
**Marina Warner** is an award-winning novelist, short story writer, historian and mythographer, who works across genres and cultures exploring myths and stories. Recent work has focused particularly on fairy tales and the *Arabian Nights*, including *Stranger Magic* (2011), and *Once Upon a Time* (2014). In *Fly Away Home: Stories* (2015) she draws on mythic predecessors, translating them into contemporary significance. In 2015 she was awarded the prestigious Holberg Prize, and in 2017 she was awarded a World Fantasy Lifetime Achievement Award. Non-fiction works include *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (1976), *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (1981), *Monuments & Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (1985), *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (1996), *No Go the Bogeyman: On Scaring, Lulling, and Making Mock* (2000), and *Phantasmagoria* (2006). She has also written several novels, including *The Leto Bundle* (2001), *Indigo* (1992), and the Booker-shortlisted *The Lost Father* (1988), and was chair of the judging panel for the Man Booker International Prize 2015. She is a Quondam Fellow of All Souls, an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Academy, and fessor of English and Creative Writing at Birkbeck College, University of London. She is writing a study of Sanctuary.

**Stevie Wishart**, B.A.Hons Music (University of York), MLitt (University of Oxford)

After initially focusing on composition an awareness of the limitations of musical notation led to Wishart's post-graduate studies in performer-composer genres: medieval music with a Vicente Canada Blanche JRF award at New College, Oxford, advanced performance at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, the founding of the ensemble Sinfonye with a series of recordings for Hyperion, and improvisation, through briefly studying with John Cage and performing with the more reductionist London & Berlin schools of improvising musicians as well as in the New York free-jazz scene with Fred Frith and the music-text group Machine for Making Sense. Her early career was as a musician for the Royal Shakespeare Company, and as composer/performer for solo music for Theatre Malpertuis in Belgium, and for ChamberMade Opera in Australia which won a Green Room Award for excellence in music theatre/opera in Australia at Peter Sellar's Adelaide Festival. Travelling widely she was able to develop her knowledge of oral music traditions such as in rural Spain, in Istanbul, and Manganiyar musicians of the Thar desert. More recently she was a Visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge working on a double-bass concerto for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Other recent works include *Out of This World* commissioned for the BBC Singers and BBC Proms, a cantata “The Seasons” for the Ipswich Choral Society (premiered at Snape Maltings, Aldeburgh), the Vespers for Hildegard (St Peter's Rome for the Vatican and York Minster for the York Early Music festival), as well as recent choral commissions for chapel choirs (St Catharine's Girls' Choir, Cambridge, and the Choir of Gonville & Caius, Cambridge). Her love of traditional and experimental music is always ongoing, and a couple of weeks ago she performed hurdy-gurdy music for Etale for the Festival Plastique Danse Flore, Le Potager du Roi, Versailles with electric bassist Kasper Toeplitz. Exploring what is special about music in terms of its ability to bring people together and express ideas on a level which is different from other forms of communication motivates her work as a composer and improviser.

## Appendix B: Ciuri Song





## Appendix C: Full Comments from Nessi with suggestions for the future

### Marina Warner

Yousif tried to direct Amadou, but he was a bit resistant, as was Dine to Mercedes's suggestions.

We didn't do enough with words - nonsense chains for songs and other mixing and matching we did before.

We didn't review and discuss and unfold the drawings and notes the participants had made on the walk and take them further, except by including some in the song. Can we ask the teachers to develop this? We are going to scan the pages so there are copies which can be circulated and used, multiply.

### Philip Terry

I found the briefer warm-ups a good idea, as it let us get stuck in to the work quickly in the mornings.

The walk was an excellent idea too, a good bonding exercise, and great to gather material (**on the Sunday we met a woman from Manifesta - Stevie has details - who was interested in Stories in Transit, and she talked about something they had done making instruments from gathered junk, which would be a nice idea to borrow, totally up Jem's street of course**). The most amazing thing was the way the students had really engaged with the whole project of stories and storytelling - and throwing things into the casserole - the way their own stories and experiences have become so much a central part of it all.

### **Wafa Tarnowska**

I loved every minute of the work with the young people and the nessi. I enjoyed working with Matthew and Mary and Lucina very much. And I'm getting very very fond of **all the Palermo teachers and these remarkable young men with such dignity.**

**Every single one of the Nessi were devoted and talented and none had egos which was such a joy to work with.** I think it was the best performances until now. So much inventiveness and sense of humour and a sense of liberation which made every one enjoy themselves.

As far as I'm concerned I think the whole operation is becoming much more slick and efficient and everyone gets on with everyone else which makes it a joy to be part of. No egos just creative focused work which produces excellent results.

I think we achieved a lot in a very short time. The highlight for me was the walk in Palermo which gave birth to our song Ciuri ciuri, which I couldn't stop singing for a whole week afterwards.

Thinking about how we could capitalise on all our work I thought that for **the Hayward's exhibition we should produce a children's book in English and Italian on the genie 🧞 of Palermo using all the pictures already drawn.** I will send you one photo I took which could be on the cover.

At the back of the book we could have a cd of the song which can be recorded in Palermo with the young people and this fabulous guitarist singer.

### **Valentina Castagna**

I think SiT V was the best workshop we have run with students so far, this might be due to the fact that we have now developed some strategies and are sufficiently trained to deal with some of the problems, although some difficulties in managing the students' presence remain. However, I had the impression that many of the students who were there were particularly active and engaged in the work. It was fun and it showed all the efforts that all the people involved made, both nessi and students. The nessi used all their abilities and talents and it was a pleasure to see how also the ones who had just joined us, Mary, Adam and Roger, managed to mingle to the others and contribute generously to the success of the event.

**One way we might solve the problem of students' focus and be sure they know what we are going to do is maybe visit them in school once or twice the week before the workshop and take more time to explain our work and the plans. We did that at the very beginning at Moltivolti and then we mentioned the performance, the different mediums we would use and the stories at the beginning of every sessions when we were in one large group, but maybe there were too many of us and communication was not easy. With smaller groups in school this might work better. I could do that with some Giocherenda members (if available) beforehand.**

**Of course**, I am extremely glad we managed to perform in the Villa Garibaldi and to have now Mr Lentini's contact, so nice of him to say I can get in touch with him directly in the future!

I met Rosario [Perricone director of the Museo] who apologizes for not being there but his flight from Tunis was delayed the day before. He would like to see you when you come next and has a proposal to perform our show at the Museum once a month. He would also like to discuss that idea that Monica, from his staff, had of exhibiting the props and maybe some videos of the performance.

Dine and Maga knew some of the students and they exchanged contacts with others (Vicky said it was the best thing she has done in Palermo since she has been here. My regret: we didn't sing our "Ciuri ciuri" version at Moltivolti!

### **Joan Ashworth**

I have made some suggestions for future in my notes which I will send soon. A good editing system would make a huge difference.

Dine is keen to make the whole film and would like some more input. He recognises the need to dramatise the sequences and is easy to work with for this. Ideally the whole story needed a screenplay and then a storyboard to make the ideas work without words, but that is pretty complex given the issues with language, but not impossible. Din acting out his story started the process of dramatisation by personifying the bereaved mother of the mythical beast/daughter.

All in all we did make progress but trying to place it within a performance needs much more thinking about. **Projecting outside into the tree, when it is dark would be magical.**

Also, I have the cut outs with me as I stuffed them all into my bag at the end thinking we might need them at the puppet theatre. I have sorted them into envelopes ready for next stage!

### **Matthew Reynolds**

Palermo was great I thought - there was an impressive sense of focus and determination on everyone's part, as well as creativity and warmth. I was very pleased to be so sucked in and feel useful. **My one thought was that it would be good to try to do something with the African languages the young people bring, as well as with their stories**

### **Mercedes Kemp**

I was particularly impressed that so many young women were involved, and how engaged they were. This is a triumph, compared to last time.

I wonder if we might be able **to do some more to facilitate a sense of *esprit the corps*, a feeling of joined purpose. I sensed this possibility during warm ups, when the whole group came together with a simple task that required cooperation and togetherness.** SiT is a community that comes together temporarily, for a very few days a year. For a short time, *nessi* and arrivants have intense experiences together.

**I crave a somewhat stronger framework for the work, something that could offer more support to the young people whilst allowing them to take ownership of their stories and their artworks.**

**I long for team meetings at the beginning of each day to discuss how the day will be organised.** Of course, any discomfort I might feel is always for the young people's work. Because I want them to shine and be proud.

Lee's and Joan's animations were a highlight. I wonder if this process could translate into larger scale shadow puppetry? Perhaps as an extension? This would minimize the time spent in rendering, etc

**It would be good to have a more multicultural team of *nessi*, if possible.**

### Mary Venturini

I agree with much of what I have read in the notes already in the drop box. The mega gap is any mention of the fantastic organisational abilities and inspiration provided by Valentina and Din and the team they managed to lead in Palermo, from the [Maria Vaccaro!]unsung woman who provided the delicious cakes at each coffee break, to Clelia, to Lucina, to Yousef, to the puppeteers and Moltivolti. I think what the Palermo resident team contributed a major part to the success of the SinTV.

I believe the way Valentina and Din worked together with both their teams is a blueprint for integration of the very best kind. I am full of admiration for the way Valentina was all-inclusive and ever-present, coupled with the quiet and dedicated way Din shepherded his "flock", even for Friday worship and prayers, just to mention one touching glimpse of his spirit of care.

One other small but interesting sidelight came from the young Pakistani who managed to enthrall some of us with his tricks with numbers and mind games. This was such a simple and effortless way of communication and what stood out for me was that he was the person who initiated the dialogue and wove the spells. All the impetus came from him and none from us. Again I feel this is the way integration should move forward; as a two-way rather than a one-way street. I was also excited by the way Din managed the staging of his very complicated story. He led the way, and the *nessi* became onlookers or bit-actors under his direction. He had very little rehearsal time but he managed to pull us all through. Traffic was flowing freely and fast down the two-way street.

In our last evening we mentioned poetry. Which brings me to the Keats Shelley House. The curator, Giuseppe Albano, has asked me for your email as I think he would like to invite you to talk about SinT. I gave Palermo and your work a big plug at our last committee meeting and everyone was very enthusiastic. May I give him your email? You probably know that Sir Ivor Roberts is the new chair in the UK?

Lastly, what about using poetry as a foundation for a possible future workshop - in the new street poetry, slam poetry, performance poetry, blackout poetry format? This would once again provide words, music and performance as a foundation on which to build. YouTube is a wash with all these forms of poetry and they are easy and fun to watch. I think this sort of poetry would make interesting cross-cultural, cross-language experiments and would be easily film-able.

## Adam Hayes

The workshop also reinforced in my mind the importance of the creative process. Even in the 2 days of workshop that I participated in, I could see a marked difference in the confidence in the refugees, especially by the time they were on stage performing.

I was extremely impressed with the whole Stories in Transit experience. There was a strong sense of chaos but I was amazed at how quickly everything pulled together and became more clear. What the workshop does is so important, and the atmosphere was so fun and exciting. The things I would change are few and far between. **I found that things were a lot easier when I focused my guys' efforts on only one story.** There was an element of the Nessi all being bright, creative people, full of ideas – but trying to accomplish all of the ideas that were flying around was a bit overwhelming, for me, and for the drummers. **Perhaps a clearer sense of focus might help, at least in that late stage of the game.** Saying that, the last thing I would ever want to do would be to stifle the creativity of any Nessi, or refugees.

In conclusion I was touched by what everyone achieved, and I was moved at the bond I formed with my 'Drum Crew' guys. **I was impressed when Mbembe and Ibrahim took me aside and told me their concerns that there were too many people joining the drummers and it was spoiling what we had rehearsed.** I wondered how long it had been since these guys had something they felt so proud of – and I was only too happy to make sure that we performed exactly what we had rehearsed.



Myself, Bouba, Mbembe and Ibrahim

### Selma Dabbagh

There was no tension in the group of nesis. Everyone was kind, helpful and supportive of what the others were doing. I really think that an exceptional aspect of the SiT Project as a whole is the way that it brings people of multiple disciplines and ages together. This is inspiring for us, as participants, not just in terms of our own interests and ideals, but also in providing some solace in meeting like-minded artists in these bleak times. **It has been discussed previously, but I don't think it would go amiss for there to be more ethnic diversity in our group.**

Lectures / updates:

I know the earlier Palermo workshops and some of those in the UK were structured more to provide us with information about the refugee situation locally, regionally and globally, but it was interesting to hear what Valentina said about how the situation had worsened in recent months, with the rise of Salvini. **A short briefing would not go amiss in the future with some statistics etc. at the start of each workshop, esp. when there are journalists, e.g.**

**like Mary present.** Given that she was not with us on a story and that she was better informed than most of us, possibly a new angle, account or angle could have inspired one of **the group to create something, even if not in the form of reportage or even words.** E.g. the story of the Nigerian begging the judge not to deport him when Valentina was interpreting at Court and the judge begging the Nigerian not to beg, which inspired much of the project.

Walk:

This was really smooth and well run. I think everyone very much enjoyed it. It was a very calming experience. It was however, quite a private experience too and so it possibly could have worked as well with fewer of us. My group did not visit any part of Manifesta – I am not sure whether any of the others did.

Workshops:

**A highpoint of the workshops for me on Day 1 was hearing some of the participants (Lamin, Mmemba) discuss the morality of Dine's story, in terms of it respect for one's parents being a blessing if you have it and a curse on you if you don't.** This should be fed into the animation –

There was also the idea that there are some sacred animals in Africa that bring about a curse if they are killed.

For the purposes of showing the animation at the Hayward and/or online I do think that the moral of disrespect for one's parents acting like a curse is just great (as spoken by a frequently ignored mother...)

Animation:

We were a small group and one of our participants, Ibrahim, was in and out in terms of his apparent interest in what we were doing. There were two Amadous who were both much more inspired. **A little curious to be trying to get grown young men who have lived through hell, torture, escape and insecure exile in a foreign land to be thinking up the type of lullaby a cat might sing to a baby, but we managed to get there,** mainly thanks to Phil's unblinking persistence and patience. Lee and Joan were also incredible in terms of their level of preparation and hard work. It is a shame however, that it is the nature of the technical necessities of animation that only a few people could try their hand at it. **There were a couple of ipads about though and maybe a way forward could be – if technology were to seep in more, which of course is a mixed blessing – to have more people working on separate stories at the same time in groups and showing them at the end. To upload basic animation software onto ipads is fairly simple.**

Show:

It was a shame that the authorisation came through so late, because it would've been fun to have had say a group of school children attend the shows or to perform them to a slightly larger audience, but as I said before they were a triumph. The props, painting and participation levels were great, as was the setting.

**Antonia Karaisl**

I've only so far experienced the workshops from far away London through pictures and recordings, this was the first time close up; hence I'd been living in the assurance that I'd had had a pretty good impression but then I was impeccably blown away with how different it

was on the ground, with the energy and just the raw joy pervading the whole workshop. Whilst the experience was quite intense at times, it was incredibly engaging and exciting and I believe that feeling was very much the same amongst the students. Speaking for myself, at least.

- It seems that on our side there was a degree of apprehension beforehand about "how it's going to go"; that apprehension seemed to disperse once we started actually doing things and at least on my part with the dawning realization that whatever happens nothing will be a catastrophe since **the whole point seemed to be very much the process, not just the output - although the prospect of the performance gave the workshop a direction.** Whatever the lesson from that, to me it seems that the lack of performance pressure or quality control is what made for a panicleless and wonderful atmosphere that allowed each person to pitch in fearlessly. **It might help for us to formulate from the beginning more clearly what the function of certain parts of the workshop are, e.g. make it crystal clear from the start that the stories that were told on the first day were not just entertainment but essentially a step of a working process. I'm not sure that was clear to everyone.**

- It was interesting to see how the students reacted to the different personalities; for example, I don't think anyone would have really taken me as enough of an authority figure to listen to stage directions or instructions, but I think I was ok to fraternize with, perhaps because I'm short and friendly. But looking at everyone else, **it was fascinating how each of the nessi seemed to develop their own role and mode of interaction with the students, and as a whole it was just faith-reassuringly, inimitably undogmatic.** It made the whole thing fun to watch and fun to participate in.

- Since I spent most time in the music group in the beginning, couple of thoughts about that. First off, **the instruments seem to have an inimitable pull on the students.** There never seemed to be a lack of people wanting to be involved there, even if it did not seem easy organizing this, language barriers included. The preparation of music bits for the actual performance might have profited from a little more planning, just to make things easier for the nessi involved - whilst the actual scenes of the plays or the animations were up in the air, it seemed hard to produce music or sounds for the actual performance or, in fact, practise; on the other hand, that allowed for a lot of space for quite joyful noise. **My suggestion would be to work beforehand with the story tellers/animators and try pick just a few scenes that need music, rather than putting music with all and everything. That seemed like a lot more work than feasible, too.**

- **It would be interesting to hear with what kind of expectation the students came to join, i.e. what they had been told about the project beforehand and what they thought was going to happen; e.g. whether they knew beforehand that there was to be some kind of performance, what kind of activities would be involved etc – not because I think that this is necessary (in fact, it might be a good thing for there to be fewer expectations) but to understand their motivations.**



## **Nicola Chemotti and Tota Pingaro**

Both of us were moved by the generosity and the strong network of affection and care we experienced at Santa Chiara, and by how organically things has evolved - given the short time we had. We were all able to create a positive environment which facilitated engagement and participation and the students really enjoyed that. They were legitimised to choose the activities they wanted to do and to explore various tasks and media. Many came to us at the end of the play to thank and kiss us.

We noticed how often some of them asked us to look at what they were doing, seeking consensus and approval. They were all very keen to do and make things.

**However some of them didn't really know what was the purpose of our activities and they were not aware that we planning to perform. How could this be improved? How to establish an effective communication with them so that they clearly understand from the beginning how vital to the project their contribution is.**

SIT is a great opportunity which can foster self-organised creative practices, beyond the four days of our workshop. **Possibly to consider what tools we and the various organizations and individuals in Palermo can share with them. They all loved performing and being on stage, some of them mentioned how great it would be if these activities would happen regularly during the year.**

just an idea, for future editions we think it would be interesting also **to focus on movements and on the bodies, or in general to stress and reinforce an idea of a collective body**, not just during the warm up exercises.

I personally think it would be also great **to open a dialogue with local young students and young people from Palermo, to facilitate encounters and forms of hybridisation.**