

## THE RETURN FROM THE INVISIBLE CITY

The intent of my journey to and back from Marseille, the project that I strongly wanted to realise due to a sudden intuition during a brief visit to this city, was the possibility of putting into play a fiction: The discovery and exploration of an unknown land. But also, on the other hand, the construction of a personal Universe; a mythical one, with a kind of unity, organicity.

In this direction I have tried to exploit all the potential that human geography could express; during three months of stay, slowly, secretly, a territory was formed around relationships and, at the same time, a group of actions defined the virtual explorer (myself, under the pseudonym of Mela Boev, 'ambassador of the Republic of the Serenissima'); Once installed in my place/spot (Atelier Des Lorette, in the Panier quartier), I started tracing the lines of a multiple path (no longer the straight line of going towards, but rather the perimeter of a narrative space that slowly reveals itself through experience).

This work in progress has led my work, which initially posed as 'invisible', to paradoxically turning out to be the opposite, so, a collective performance concluding the Ville Invisible Experience on 1st April 2004.

During three months following my arrival in Marseille, the stages of my mapping, defined a priori (see presentation sheet), remained unchanged;

- the first was: to identify human institutions that could support and adhered to the Game;
- the second was: to conceive sound performances that would give these places a new identity;
- the third : to transform each performance into a “not” that together with others, would build a Founding Mythology, a set of stories referring to the Creation of an Imaginary City, La Ville Invisible;

the last: to draw a series of geographical visions- topographies that would resurrect all this universe to an icon (sort of personal Mappa Mundi).

I decided to work mainly with: sound, drawing and writing, neglecting the use of video documentation, to leave large margin to the un-conceivable, the esoterical, an opening to imagination that somehow would possibly allow an infinite multiplication of storytelling.

Sound being a real a "space detector" for me, and, at the same time, a great attractor, it has the ability to make a place around itself.

This is why I have reported a "specific sound" to each chosen place in the city, and connected every sound to a set of narratives.

The construction of these stories, I would like to note, if in some way it began even beforehand, in a unicellular intuitive way, it was far from being set once for all at the being of the residency; intrinsically linked to the encounters and suggestions born during the performance, this latter therefore not limited to a *mise en scène* or even to a "dispositive", turned out to be a mixture of art and life experience that was an unparalleled source of inspiration for me as poet and human being:

I forced myself to let myself listen, avoiding being influenced a priori by too careful research of popular traditions and the history of the city, preferring the experience of coexistence to lead me through, to bring me back the submerged worlds and the fantastic ones which mirrored the history of Marseille in a surprising way, but only during the process and afterwards.

A story so varied that it could not be said to be one, but infinite ones, the stories of all the peoples who have populated it over the centuries and finally gave it a present Identity.

Mythology and geography were intertwined in practice,, as already said, as stories written while I drew the new invisible

territory, populated by fantastic characters and events that made up the weaving of the stories-myths.

The maps, not surprisingly, multiplied during the creative process, became many, but somehow they all tell the same story in different ways, revealing new and different aspects each time.

Each map is related, for me, to a mindset and a vision of the world, dia-chronical, syn-chronicle.

The fact that my work *La Ville Invisible* ended with a Collective Performance, a sort of Parade, was I believe no coincidence (I fully realise it just now that everything is over): it was the natural evolution of a research on mythology.

Because what is Myth if not a “collective work”, a choral story”?

This is why I asked not so much for the staging of the my stories by actors, but rather the active intervention of artists so that they could each create a work (a song, a sculpture, a video, a story, a performance) in the very moment in which they embodied a moment of Mythology.

I could define it as playing the game and telling it at the same time.

Mela B. July 2004