

Benedetta Manfredi

Portfolio



I am a singer and an interdisciplinary artist. Born in Florence, where I live and work, I have pursued both artistic and classical studies, in Italy and in France. I graduated in education with a focus on care for frailty, which is one of the central themes in my artistic research, and stands in opposition to the anthropology of oppression and the repression of death that characterize contemporary society. As a mother of four daughters, I explore through sound and image one of the most powerful taboos of contemporary art, that of being both an artist and a mother, and, in a more general sense, the numerous aspects of a hermeneutic of relationships which is conditioned by oppressive cultural stereotypes. I've been working across artistic disciplines for many years - video, photography, illustrations, multimedia installations - which has produced a multiform body of work. Sound and voice are and always have been at the heart of my artistic research and production, experienced and interpreted as diachronic and synchronic generators of encounters, exchanges, permeation between cultures, generations, and different human areas which are often erroneously separated (tradition and contemporaneity, frailty and healing, gender powers and dynamics, travel/migration and belonging, religious faiths and historical contexts, normativity and play). Beginning from the conviction that art is a powerful medium of relationship and healing, particularly art that arises from the human voice, I examine the explicit and hidden resonances of individual and collective spaces, the sounds and songs emerging from oppression, the complex relationship between the voices of individuals and the crowded contemporary infosphere, and the nature and 'sounds' of silence. All this represents the raw material of a work in progress, offered as a creative space capable of including both the artist and the public.



Dendron

2013

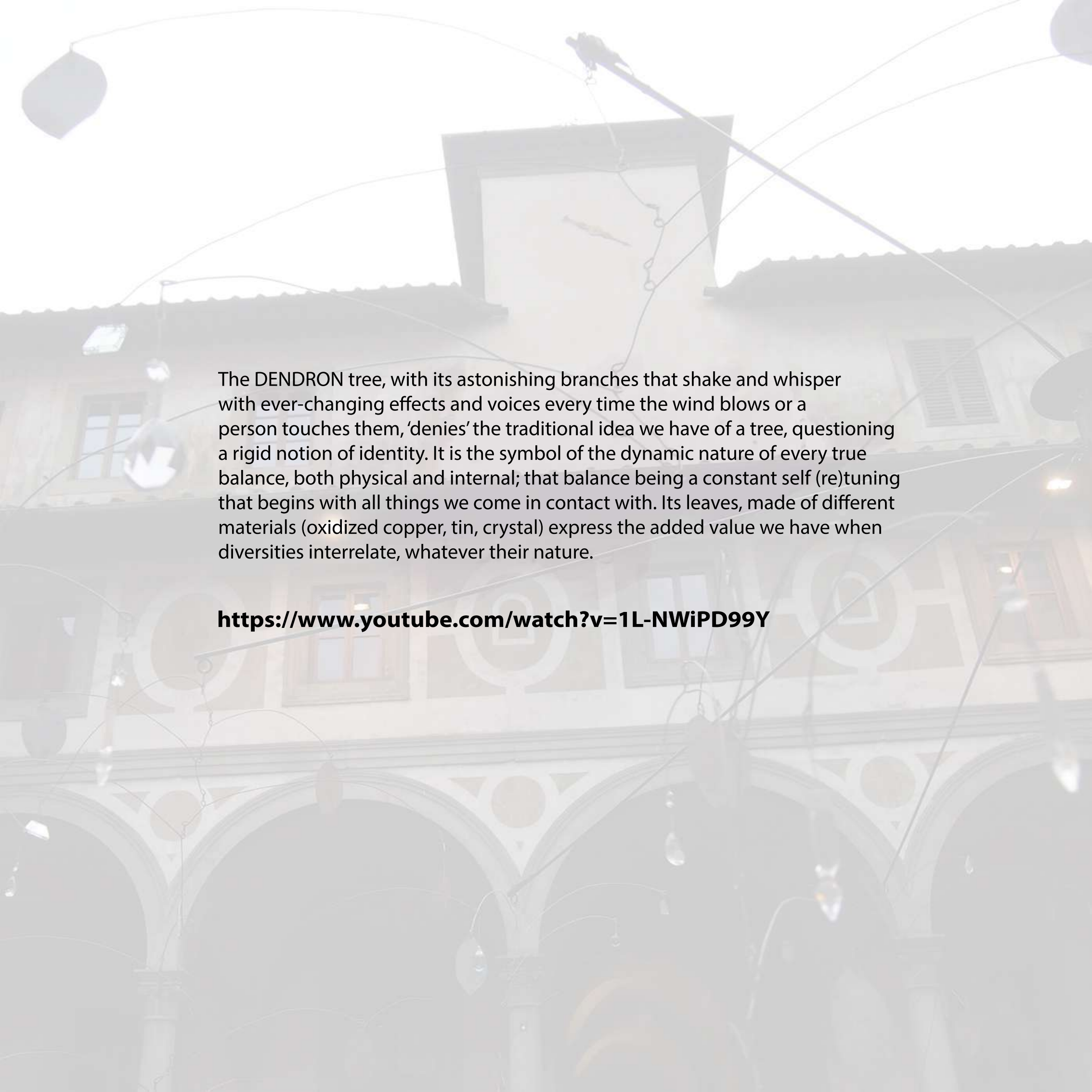
Sound sculpture

Iron, wood, copper, glass
m 2,50 h x m 3,00 diam.

Sound design:
Francesco Casciaro/
TEMPO REALE

Curated by
Maria Cristina Carratù

In cooperation with
Istituto degli Innocenti
Firenze



The DENDRON tree, with its astonishing branches that shake and whisper with ever-changing effects and voices every time the wind blows or a person touches them, 'denies' the traditional idea we have of a tree, questioning a rigid notion of identity. It is the symbol of the dynamic nature of every true balance, both physical and internal; that balance being a constant self (re)tuning that begins with all things we come in contact with. Its leaves, made of different materials (oxidized copper, tin, crystal) express the added value we have when diversities interrelate, whatever their nature.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1L-NWiPD99Y>

The background of the entire page is an abstract, high-contrast image. It features thick, vertical, and slightly irregular red streaks or bands that run across a lighter, greyish-white textured surface. The texture appears grainy and somewhat metallic or like aged paper. There are also some horizontal lines and smaller, scattered red specks throughout the composition.

WUNDE(r)

2016, Photo exhibition

in cooperation with
Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Amburgo

Imperfection, brokenness, interruption, failure are the stages through which life is life. As the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, so life continually passes from one form to another. Surprises, more or less dramatic, which tear veils, shred certainties, injure identities, showing something else which we had no idea was there: the raw material waiting to play its part in the demanding journey of discovery of the 'more' by which we are constituted, often unawares, despite our resistance. The photo gallery offered here proposes two brief journeys: the first, into the wounds and scars from which our existence is woven, to explore and celebrate their meaning without shackling this to conventional decypherings. The second is a journey of the soul, a dance of liberation and rebirth, an initiation: the continuing metamorphosis of the human crysalis.

The catalogue of the exhibition is online:

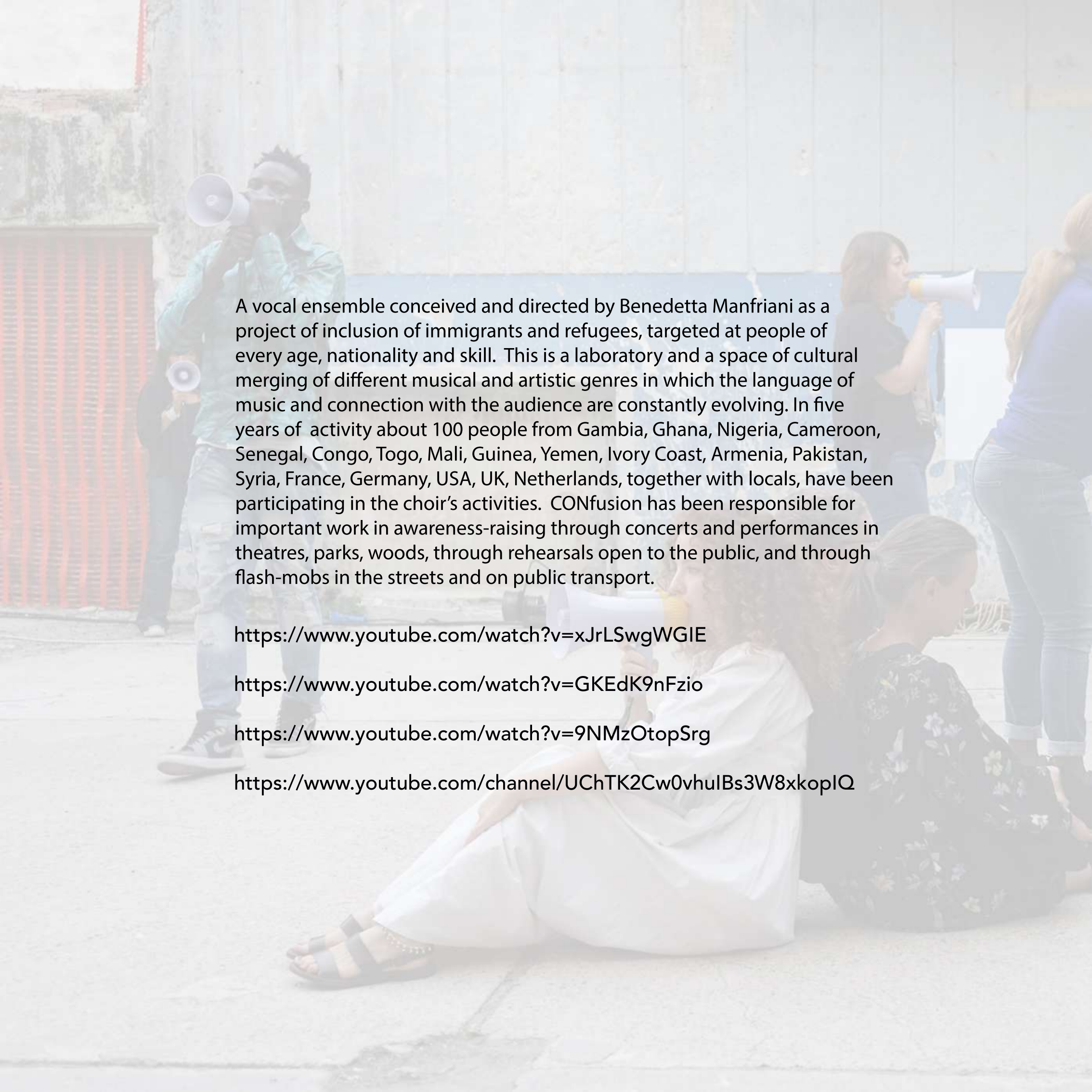
<https://goo.gl/zWVE5G>

CONfusion

2016-

Work in progress





A vocal ensemble conceived and directed by Benedetta Manfriani as a project of inclusion of immigrants and refugees, targeted at people of every age, nationality and skill. This is a laboratory and a space of cultural merging of different musical and artistic genres in which the language of music and connection with the audience are constantly evolving. In five years of activity about 100 people from Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Senegal, Congo, Togo, Mali, Guinea, Yemen, Ivory Coast, Armenia, Pakistan, Syria, France, Germany, USA, UK, Netherlands, together with locals, have been participating in the choir's activities. CONfusion has been responsible for important work in awareness-raising through concerts and performances in theatres, parks, woods, through rehearsals open to the public, and through flash-mobs in the streets and on public transport.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJrLSwgWGIE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKEdK9nFzio>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NMzOtopSrg>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChTK2Cw0vhuIBs3W8xkopIQ>

Necklace of (extra)ordinary moments

2017, cm 20x300 ceramics, glass, paper, copper, plastic



The necklace of (extra)ordinary moments gives attention to every lived moment, even those involving the most everyday activities, to underline the intrinsic preciousness of time.

Thirteen little photos in stop motion, which capture the routine of putting socks on, are embedded in ceramics if they were precious stones.

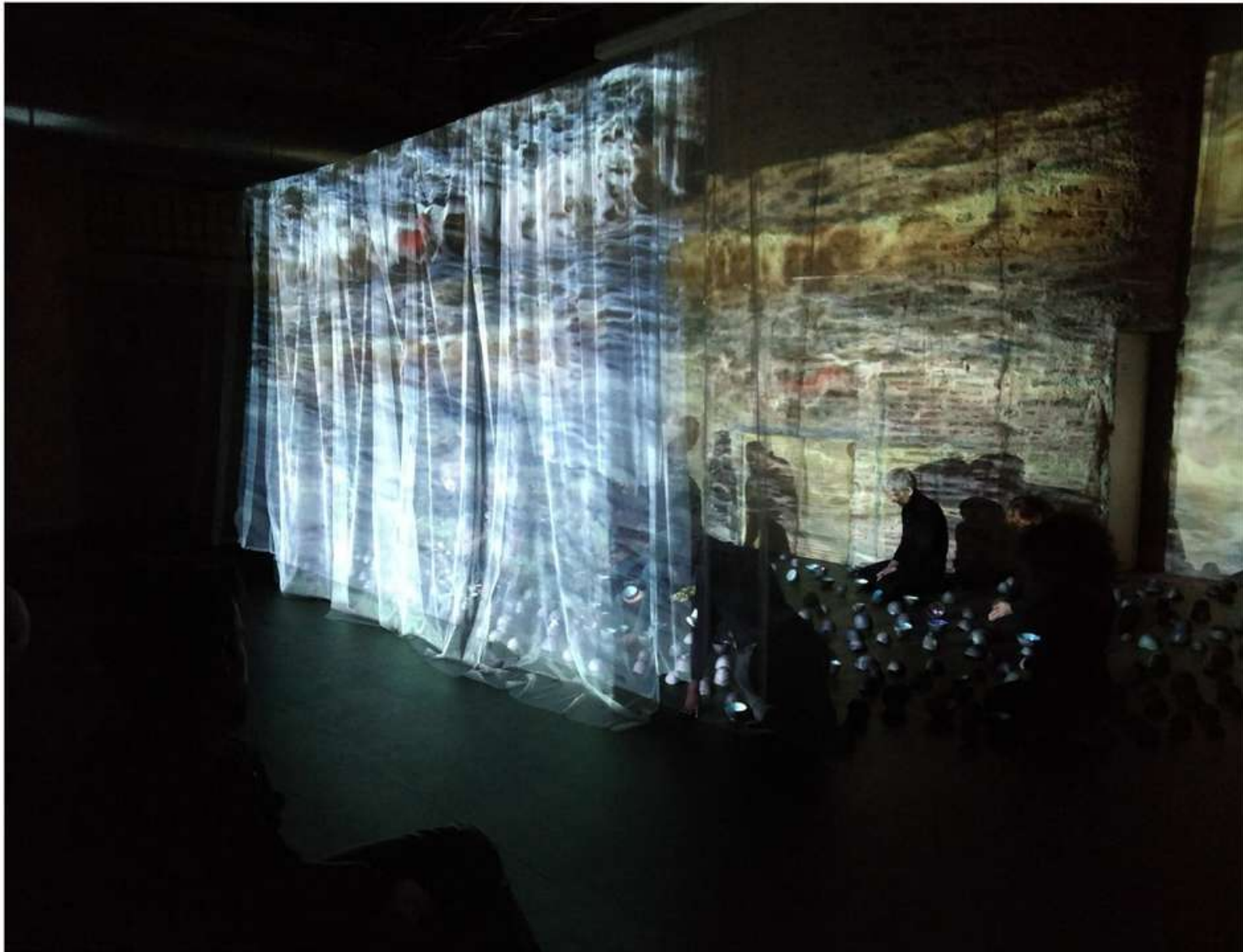


Mediterranea

2018

Video, 600 Raku bowls, performance

Sound design Agnese Banti



Six hundred empty raku ceramic bowls, black on the outside, blue, turquoise, light blue, white, copper on the inside, each one different from the other. On the walls and on the ceiling of the same room, a video-projection of the moving sea. Each bowl is hand-made, imperfect, perfectible. It welcomes, receives and gives. Even when it is broken, it maintains its hollow shape and it can contain and offer. It is the Mediterranean Sea, on whose shores Western civilization was born, and to whose coasts thousands of human beings come today looking for hope. Europe, theatre of the great Jewish tragedy of the Shoah that has permanently marked recent history, after colonialism and the exploitation of other continents' human and environmental resources, must re-discover the spirit of Frederik II's Sicily, symbol of a peaceful and productive coexistence between Christianity, Islam and Judaism, between the Byzantine, Arabic and Norman worlds. The Israeli-Palestinian question, Islamic terrorism and the great migrations of today confront us with the responsibility every one of us has in the light of history.

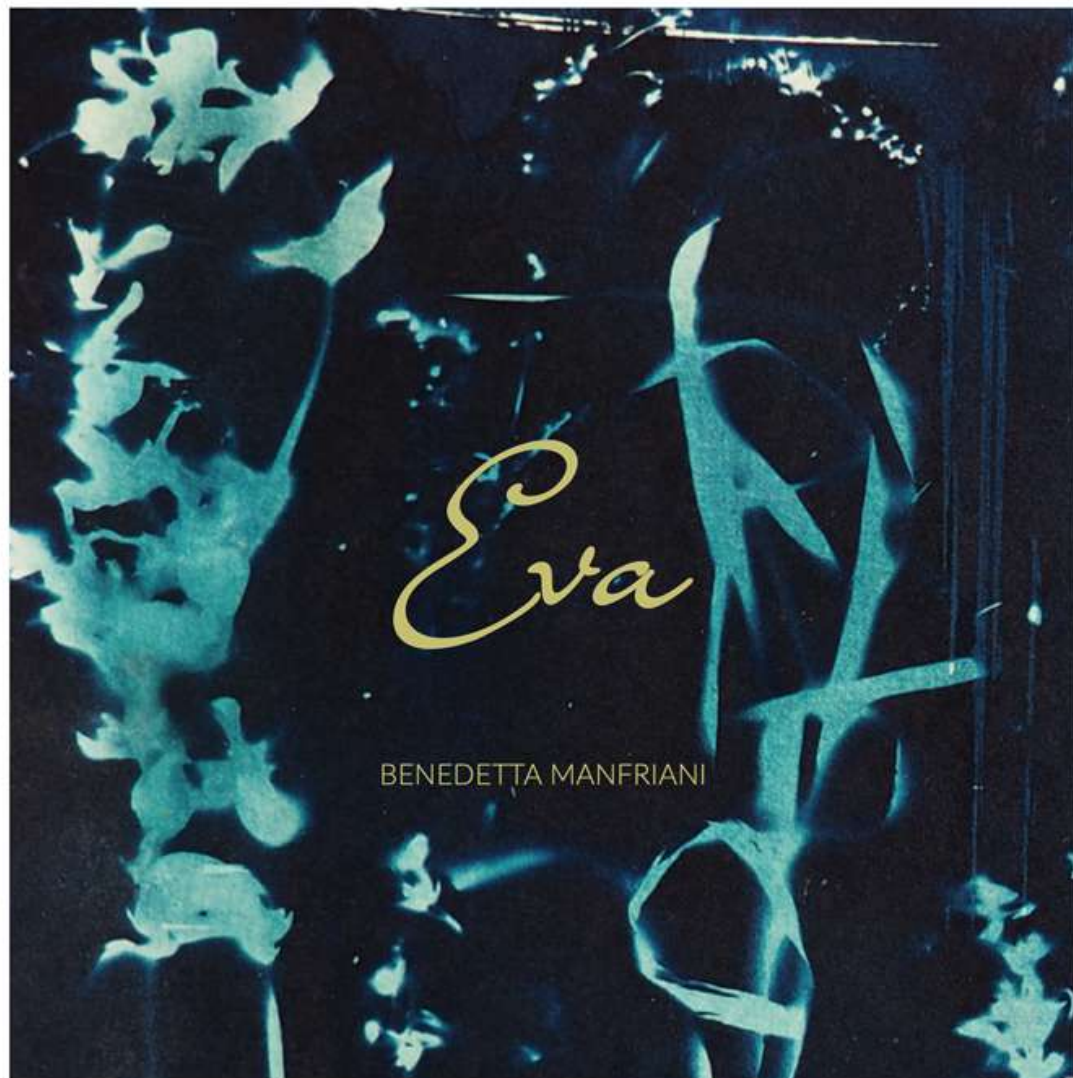
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAPrIArK7AY>

2019, Festival dei diritti, MAD Murate Art District, Firenze
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJWUHJWodtQ&t=28s>

2019, CineEcoSeia-Festival DME, Lisbona

2018, Ikigai Room, Bologna
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1msvv15BwA>

2018, Giornata Internazionale della ceramica.
in collaborazione con Chini Museo&Contemporary, Borgo S. Lorenzo
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hw-1fPsMG1Y>



EVA Storie di R-Esistenza

2021

Concept and voice

Benedetta Manfriani

Guitars

Sandro Bertieri

Electronic, percussions

Agnese Banti

Sax, tampura

Roberto Laneri

Production Catalyst

With the contribution of

Mibact

Regione Toscana

Comune di Barberino di Mugello

Fondazione Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze

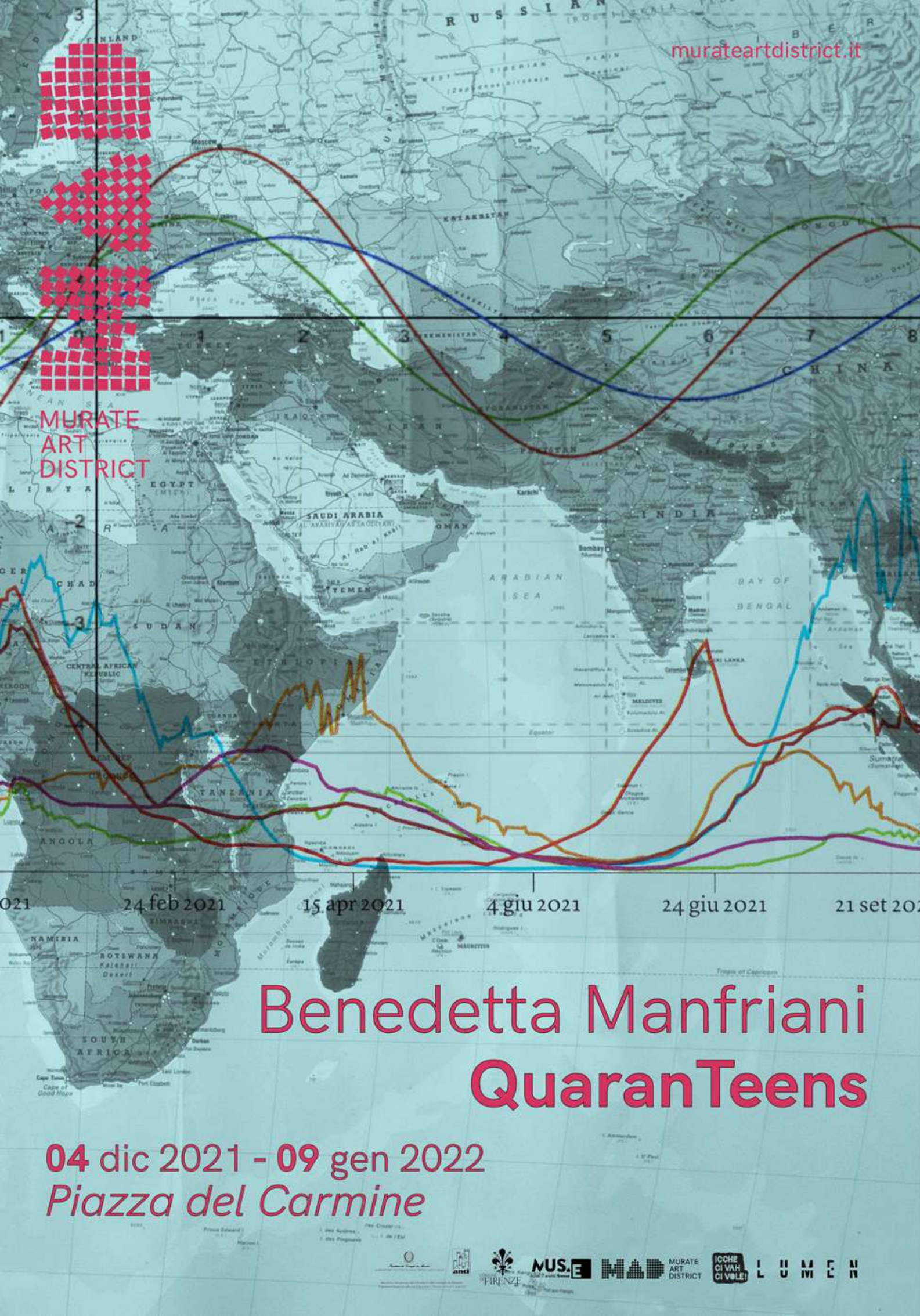
Coopo Unicoop Firenze

Eva, Stories of Resistance and Existence was born in 2020 during the first lockdown, and through music both ancient and recent is asking how exceptional what we are living through might be. The world has always had to face epidemics, famines and problems of all kinds, but only in recent decades have human beings begun to believe themselves immortal. Life is fragile, precarious, precious and very, very tenacious. The title of the album, 'Eve', comes from the hebrew word 'Chawwah' and means life. The album tells of life's strength, as it is reborn wherever and however, as it clambers up the soul's stone walls and into its cracks in order to flower anew. It tells of the life which always catches up with us, even with songs. It is a Pop album in which traditional styles of music (Italian and other) meet electronic.

You can see a video and hear excerpt from a song:

<https://youtu.be/EuQDmQ4p5OI>

<https://youtu.be/15amCH9zPEI>



murateartdistrict.it

MURATE
ART
DISTRICT

QuaranTeens
Sound Installation,
2021

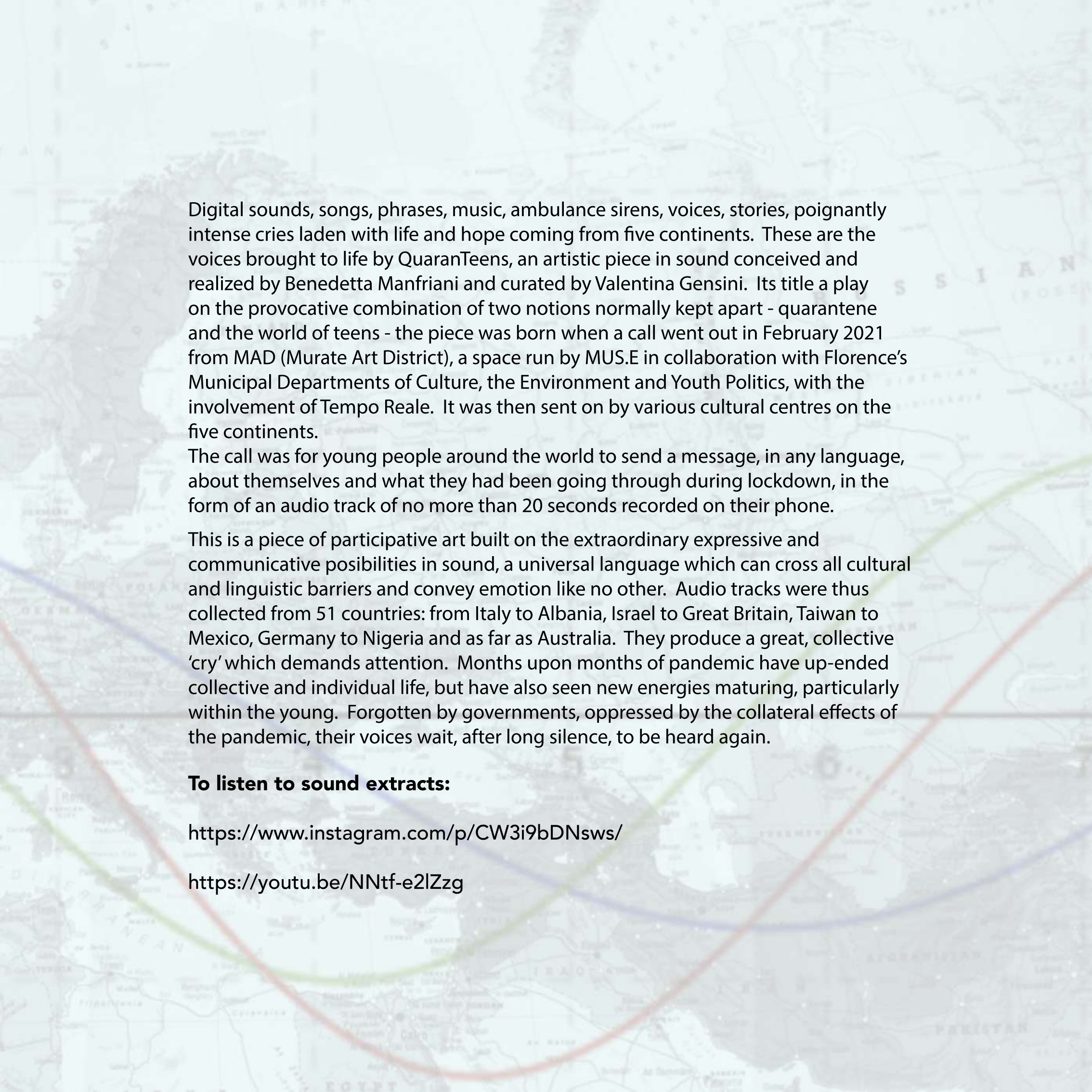
Sound Design
Giovanni Magaglio/
Tempo Reale

curated by
Valentina Gensini

Production
MAD Murate Art District

Benedetta Manfredi
QuaranTeens

04 dic 2021 - 09 gen 2022
Piazza del Carmine



Digital sounds, songs, phrases, music, ambulance sirens, voices, stories, poignantly intense cries laden with life and hope coming from five continents. These are the voices brought to life by Quaranteens, an artistic piece in sound conceived and realized by Benedetta Manfredi and curated by Valentina Gensini. Its title a play on the provocative combination of two notions normally kept apart - quarantine and the world of teens - the piece was born when a call went out in February 2021 from MAD (Murate Art District), a space run by MUS.E in collaboration with Florence's Municipal Departments of Culture, the Environment and Youth Politics, with the involvement of Tempo Reale. It was then sent on by various cultural centres on the five continents.

The call was for young people around the world to send a message, in any language, about themselves and what they had been going through during lockdown, in the form of an audio track of no more than 20 seconds recorded on their phone.

This is a piece of participative art built on the extraordinary expressive and communicative possibilities in sound, a universal language which can cross all cultural and linguistic barriers and convey emotion like no other. Audio tracks were thus collected from 51 countries: from Italy to Albania, Israel to Great Britain, Taiwan to Mexico, Germany to Nigeria and as far as Australia. They produce a great, collective 'cry' which demands attention. Months upon months of pandemic have up-ended collective and individual life, but have also seen new energies maturing, particularly within the young. Forgotten by governments, oppressed by the collateral effects of the pandemic, their voices wait, after long silence, to be heard again.

To listen to sound extracts:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CW3i9bDNsws/>

<https://youtu.be/NNtf-e2lZzg>

www.benedettamanfriani.com