

Project title: Una Forza del Passato (A Force from the Past)

Description: an archeological excavation of the Borghetto Latino in the Parco Regionale dell'Appia Antica, Rome, ('Exploded View', CLUE+VU in cooperation with Zone2Source, NL)

After the war, the city of Rome, grew substantially, as one of the driving forces behind the "Italian economic miracle", which led to an unregulated urban growth. In a relative short period, many informal neighborhoods emerged on the outskirts of the city. This also happened within the boundaries of what is today known as the Via Appia Antica park, such as the *Borghetto Latino* in de Caffarella park and the *Acquedotto Felice* in the *Parco degli Acquedotti*. The project 'Una Forza del Passato' deals with the story of the Borghetto Latino, a neighborhood, originally constructed to accommodate Roman residents displaced by the Mussolini's demolition projects in the 1930s (the so-called *Borgate*). In the 1940s and 1950s, these neighborhoods rapidly transformed into impoverished 'shantytowns' due to the influx of many people from the heavily bombed parts in the south of Italy.

Life in the Borghetto Latino was difficult, hundreds of families lived in miserable conditions amongst the many ancient ruins in the park. In 1969, in collaboration with the Communist party (PCI) and the student movement, the residents of the Borghetto organized a protest, which formed the beginning of the official expropriation of the area in 1973 and was preceded by an occupation of three buildings in the center of the city. In support of their case and to prevent a possible eviction from the newly squatted buildings, the inhabitants organized a manifestation (*Distruzione delle Baracche*) in the Borghetto. In a desperate attempt to create more momentum and political awareness, residents started to demolish their own dwellings. The demolition was widely covered in the media and led to the formation of the 'L'unione delle Borgate' (the union of townships), which eventually contributed to structural change. The Borghetto Latino was the first 'shantytown' in Rome that got cleared, whereby its inhabitants were relocated to better housing facilities. In the 1970s, many more informal neighborhoods followed and the living conditions of thousands of people improved significantly. The protest was a key moment in the history of the Italian housing movement and it formed a crucial step in the formation of the Via Appia Antica park.



manifestation 'Distruzione delle baracche', Borghetto Latino 1969

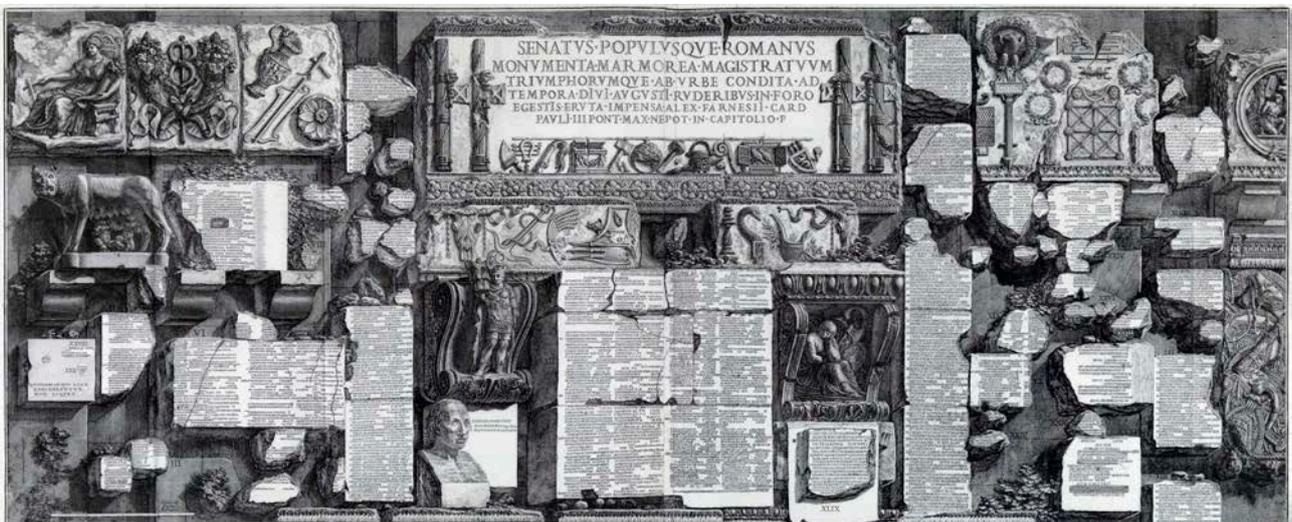
2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the political manifestation in the Borghetto Latino. But in contrast to the well-documented ancient history, there is very little that reminds people of the recent past. There is not a single monument or information panel that commemorates the story of the Borghetto or the revolutionary revolt that took place. Nowadays, the Caffarella park is a idyllic landscape with many ancient ruins, as if time has stood still for centuries. The project 'Una Forza del Passato' aims to temporarily disrupt this seemingly peaceful setting by means of a public intervention in the form of an archeological excavation on the site of the former Borghetto Latino. The remains of the neighborhood, such as the fundaments, tile flooring and doorsteps (which are still there) will be mapped as if it were an official archeological excavation of a Roman temple, including tools, such as: trowels, clippers, brushes, buckets, dustpans, wheelbarrows and a broad range of measuring tools. All the findings will be documented and used for the design of an information plaque that will be installed on site.



Remains of the Borghetto Latino in the Caffarella park

It is likely that the excavation will attract the attention of passersby and local residents. Their curiosity forms an crucial part of the project, as the public will be questioned about their memories and ideas related to the history of the Borghetto Latino. The excavation will not only document the physical remnants but also register the mental fragments within the collective memory. The first step in the process is to make detailed field drawings, with the help of an archeological planning frame. These (analogue) drawings will be put on display next to the dig site, allowing visitors to follow the proceedings. Secondly, fragments (quotes) from the interviews with the participants will be used as an overlay text within these drawings, so they will resemble roman epigraphs, as found in many other places in the park. And thirdly, the collection of field drawings will be used as study material for a large scale archeological illustration (copperplate engraving), based on the so-called 'fragment' series of Piranesi, in which he systematically combined different archeological findings in speculative reconstructions and collages. With these prints, Piranesi tried to link the individual elements in order to create a coherent narrative out of the chaotic and fragmented past. The illustration for the 'Una Forza del Passato' project will be constructed following a similar approach by merging the different field drawings together in one archeological illustration that will be exhibited during the exhibitions in Rome and Amsterdam. Finally, the print will be displayed on an information panel within the park, as a (temporary) monument in commemoration of the Borghetto Latino.

The aim of the project is to see to what extent the story of the Borghetto Latino is part of the cultural heritage. Will the archeological site be recognized as a *lieu de mémoire* (site of memory), as conceptualized by the French historian Pierre Nora, or do people chose to ignore it? What do people remember and what did the demolition do for the development of the Via Appia park? The contrast between the seemingly worthless remains of the Borghetto versus the dedicated and detailed excavation methodology is meant to trigger a discussion on the meaning of heritage. Who or what decides what belongs to the cultural heritage? How can the boundaries be extended to include forgotten histories and/or marginal stories? With a special interest in the void between the different fragments, the project aims to create a speculative space, in which the excavated remains function as semantic building blocks for the imagination of an alternative reality. Given the current problems concerning the informal Roma and migrant camps in the city, it does not seem to be an unnecessary luxury to have people reminded of the successes of the housing movement from the last century. Why was the housing movement in the 1970s able to pressure politicians to find structural solutions for the housing problems of the people in the *borgate*, and why isn't the same thing happening today for the people living in the new shanty towns?



The illustration will be based on the engraving of Giovanni Battista Piranesi: "Senatus populusque romanus monumenta marmorea ..." (stones of the capitoline), copperplate engraving, black ink, 58.4 × 122.6 cm, from the volume 'Lapides Capitolini', edition Salomoni, Rome 1762.

Project details:

- Location:



The project is situated in the area of the former Borghetto Latino in the Caffarella park. Focus-point of the project is the location where the Via Latina is interrupted by the northern part of the Caffarella park. It is an area between Via di Vigna Fabbri and Via Giulio Cesare Cordara near the entry of the soccer club (Polisportiva de Rossi, Via di Vigna Fabbri, 00179 Roma RM, Italy)

- Production

The 'Excavation' period is planned to take place between 18.03.2019 and 31.03.2019 with a group of 7 people.