

## Salgemma interviews Luigi Bagaglia

### Introduction

*Luigi Bagaglia graduated in 2021 in Visual Arts at the IUAV in Venice, developing a thesis with art historian Angela Vettese and Camilla Salvaneschi, which relates the various approaches of independent publishing and the **paracuratorial** dimension, understood as a horizontal practice that brings together a constellation of authors who contribute to shaping an editorial project.*

*Part of the research carried out was realised through the creation of a publication, developed by Bagaglia by constructing a very neat visual path through text and images.*

**The aim of your project can be summarised as the desire to identify "the role and project modalities of independent art publishing in the second millennium, placing these in relation to the expansion of the range of action and the changes taking place in the panorama of contemporary curatorial practices". After your analysis, how do you think a project that is both a curatorial platform - and a publishing platform - develops?**

The expression curatorial platform has been used in relation to the experiences of CURA and KALEIDOSCOPE, journals born at the end of the years that 2000 are part of a publishing trend that is based on a different idea of publishing, which is not limited only to "the production of paper material" but which goes through a project stratification on several parallel levels, interconnected with each other.

Certainly at the heart of the project is the magazine's editorial office, a primary meeting place where personal relationships are created with artists, curators, critics and contributors of various kinds, which will lead to the development of projects beyond the space of the page.

It should be emphasised that both these realities manage exhibition spaces. For KALEIDOSCOPE there is Spazio Maiocchi in Milan, while for CURA there is The Basement Rome space, places where exhibitions of artists with whom one has previously come into contact through the pages of the magazine are held, the curatorship of which is affidata to authors who contribute to animating the editorial part of the magazine.

Promotional events for the launch of the new issue of the magazine are also organised in these locations, creating a real meeting point with the community of readers who see themselves in the editorial slant of the project. Dialogue-participation events are also organised in these locations, which can be discussion panels, talks, conferences, and symposia.

Let's say that I seem to see in these operations a magazine that also acts as an institution, on several levels, and it was interesting to explore how these realities have developed over time a dynamic identity that moves in different spheres in a sprawling way of contemporary visual production

Even more interesting for my research was to focus on the figure of the editor and to recognise his curatorial vision, which requires several ways of restitution in order to manifest a complete and multifaceted vision that is not limited to the space of the magazine.

**"The book is an extension of the eye," wrote 1967 sociologist and media theorist Marshall McLuhan. You can borrow this quote to immerse us in the physical world of publishing and your own research, giving the book a way to express itself as a "place of showing, acting and determining" and include it in the art history and curatorial practice.**

This quote allowed me to investigate in the second part of the work the materiality of the book object, its formal characteristics, the private relationship between user-subject, book device and its content. This was done by analysing the publications of Roma Publications, a Dutch publishing house active in the production of art books produced in close collaboration with artists, curators, designers, and creative people.

I think the use of the double page is central, as a surface within which several fields of force act to keep the page continually in tension. Even in the final part of the thesis, which is linked to publication, I wanted this relationship to be established, which progresses as you leaf through the pages, as you go on in a narrative.

I also speak of the book as a display device, using the term display: I have analysed some of the publications of this publishing house and observed how each book presents different restitutive methodologies and strategies depending on the project and how the book object reasons with its own logic through an interpenetration of text and images. The temporal experience of the book device becomes important in the analysis of the object one holds in one's hands.

Lucy Lippard affirms how "The double page is degree zero for the book space, one image speaks for itself another critiques it. One image can be powerful, another can disarm it, enliven it, change its significance, sequence, and add more. In the book the sequences continue offering unlimited possibilities to say something complex and provocative.

**How would you summarise the definition that also gives the subtitle to your thesis 'Publishing in the Paracuratela'.**

The term paracuratorial first appeared in the pages of a magazine, *The Exhibitionist* in 2011, founded and edited by curator Jens Hoffmann, who connotes it negatively by emphasising a series of ancillary and secondary practices in curatorial practice.

In the period I have analysed - from 2011 to around 2013/2014 - it is noticeable how the proliferation of "secondary" curatorial methodologies, which start from a dialogic and participatory exhibition and often replace the exhibition medium itself with lectures, symposia, discussion arenas and conferences, is gaining more and more space in the programmes of research spaces, independent spaces and public and private institutions.

Within this discourse, the use of the term event is gaining ground, a term that has the capacity to unite several voices in a non-hierarchical form of curatorial work, but which proceeds horizontally and which I find above all in editorial practice.

This mode can be traced back to a moment and the specific example of Beirut in 2014 with *Critical machines*, which consisted of an exhibition and a programme of conferences where numerous publishers from various parts of the world, divided into thematic areas, debated using the magazine as a means of critically analysing the status of art production and distribution.

**The last chapter of your thesis is a publication designed by you. Starting from "the dimension of the book as a concrete space, it is conceived as the organisation of some contributions of a visual/textual nature shared by some authors - whom you invited - and who use the publication as an expressive medium and research tool". Can you tell us how you realised this part of the editorial project?**

In a curatorial perspective that is broadening its horizons, in a participatory and non-hierarchical vision, I have chosen to involve in this project several authors from different fields of visual production, united using the publication medium both as an expressive and research tool.

I carried out the entire project in collaboration with Roberto Lenza (in graphic design) and requested visual and textual contributions from various authors to outline their authorial imagery and respective fields of research, both in terms of textual and visual suggestions and documentation of their work. The authors involved are Riccardo Giacconi, Lisa Andreani and Simona Squadrito from *REPLICA* and Roberta Mansueto from *takecare*.

The discussion concerned authorship and how various visions can emerge within the same device: I took part as curator and chose to respond to the suggestions that were offerte to me. I took part as curator and I chose to respond to the suggestions that were offerte to me. By inserting my own materials, which could generate new imagery through assonance and discordance, through my personal sensitivity I generated a new narrative of shared imagery within the book, a device of showing.