

City Telling

The Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Foundation (FSRR) was established in Turin in 1995. Its mission is to promote contemporary culture in different domains (visual arts, music, theatre, cinema, dance, literature, fashion). FSRR supports young artists by providing funding and exhibition space for their work. Its two exhibition venues, located in Guarene d'Alba and Turin, respectively opened in 1997 and 2002.

City Telling was conceived by the Education Department as the ideal continuation of a previous project, *A Vision of My Own*, which explored through audiovisual language the themes of identity (portrait and self-portrait), journey, the experience of distance and proximity, the reflection on collective and individual past and present. The underlying goal of these two projects was and is to increase the opportunities for cultural participation of young immigrants and their families, by providing participants (CTP students) with new tools to get to know the place where they have settled and at the same time build a common ground, a “third space” of cultural, linguistic and aesthetic interaction.

Objectives

- To help participants develop a critical understanding of the reality surrounding them; increase their ability to analyse and communicate their own experience of the world; acquire the necessary skills to carry out personal inquiry and re-discover the urban territory where they live;
- To promote language learning;
- To develop transversal skills in close connection with the school curriculum.

Phases

City Telling started with the setting up of a project team composed by the FSRR education staff, teachers from CTP “Drovetti” (CTPs are Centres for Adult Education and Training), the artist-director Gianluca De Serio and photographer Anna Largaiolli, who exchanged views and expertise with respect to:

- the chosen theme for the project (the city);
- the knowledge of the territory to explore during the project: research of iconographic sources, selection of videos and photographs, choice of local cultural resources around which to build the itineraries and workshops (museums, temporary exhibitions, squares, public installations, parks...);
- the methodological approach (pluralistic and interdisciplinary approach; story-telling, a methodology well known to the education staff of Foundation thanks to the previous experience of *A Vision of My Own*), also in cooperation with MAMbo – Museum of Modern Art Bologna (for the development of a common education project) and the National Museum of Cinema (for the creation of a joint interactive platform to make the project results visible).

From November 2008 to May 2009, the group of young students has been actively involved in the exploration of local urban space. The starting point consisted in sharing the “geo-cultural” origins of individual participants through storytelling and the use of objects, photographs, postcards and web technologies.

In the following phase of the project, Serio and Largaiolli, in close cooperation with the Education Department, guided the students in two parallel “itineraries” (15 meetings / workshops) respectively devoted to video and photographic storytelling. The two working

groups developed a personal route across urban space, by identifying significant spots of the city (schools, museums, libraries, private homes, gardens, worship places, urban installations, services and meeting spaces) and collecting their manifold impressions in a journal made of photographs, “findings” and audiovisual creations. Participants also had a chance to work at leisure in the Foundation’s exhibition spaces, where the artworks provided valuable insights for reflection, writing and the planning of project materials.

The final phase of the project consists in the implementation of an interactive platform including pictures, videos, texts and sounds. Conceived as a flexible, in-progress tool which is transferable to other cultural and territorial contexts, the platform was designed by a group of arts school students, coordinated by the education staffs of FSRR and the National Museum of Cinema (see also *Map for Turin* project).

Outcomes

- At participant level: creation of a cohesive group, familiarity with contemporary arts venues and languages, development of arts skills, greater knowledge of / sense of belonging to the local territory, opportunity for self-expression, language learning;
- At partner level: opportunity for exchange of skills and expertise between operators with different institutional and professional backgrounds (although project coordinators pointed out that a clearer definition of roles and responsibilities will be necessary in future projects), development of intercultural competencies of the education staff, greater awareness of the whole staff of the Foundation (curators included);
- At institutional level: contact / relationship with a target group traditionally excluded from contemporary art spaces, commitment to developing an intercultural project on a yearly basis, greater acknowledgement of the Foundation’s social role on the part of local communities.

Institution

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Target groups

Young students of immigrant background (aged between 14 and 20) attending a local Centre for Adult Education and Training