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Local Pandemics: a mosaic of voices in a sudden present

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#PandemieLocali is a collection of short videos about the pandemic #Covid19 made in the distance, in order to connect points of view, places, experiences and perspectives on the edge of this sudden present. The idea comes from the need and desire to share doubts and questions in order to compose a collective reflection capable of showing the ambivalences, complexities and possibilities of this moment. We share here the first interviews, to which others will be added, and some reflections on our work.

Nic Beuret reflects critically on what a pandemic is to escape the sense of helplessness that characterizes this time. Marta Malo talks to us about the production of *commons* against the privatization of life in confinement. Enrica Rigo reflects on what freedom of movement is when decrees and policies segment and exclude, while practices affirm new continuities. Bernd Kasperek tells us from Munich about the asymmetries of solidarity and the worrying absence of Europe in the face of the protagonism of nation states. Through the experience of Alarm Phone, Jacob Berkson tells us about the *proximity in the distance* with migrants. Élisabeth Lebovici takes us back to another story, that of Act Up, where the militant relationship with the AIDS virus was a space for

experimenting with new political practices, which can also be useful today. Sandro Mezzadra reflects on digital platforms as the privatization of social interactions and the challenges that await us beyond the lockdown. More videos are being edited and more voices will be collected in the coming days.

But how do these interviews come about? Confined in a quiet Roman neighbourhood we found ourselves, like many others, wondering about "what is to be done" in an all too immediate way. How can we build a *vita activa* trapped in the private space of the house? How can we act and talk if our daily life is disconnected from social interaction, if proximity is denied, if it is no longer possible to reflect collectively? How can we save ourselves if not together?

Technologies immediately break this polarization between public and private, between proximity and distance. We started chatting more and more, in the park (as long as we could) and on digital platforms, asking questions, discovering points of intensity that have started to embroider an unknown territory. Suddenly quarantine became an active practice of exploration, instead of a passive exercise of obedience. We remembered what Philippe Pignare and Isabelle Stengers wrote about how important it is to scrutinize the seabed and not just the horizon in order to move in territories unknown to us.

> «Sounders of the depths may well stay at the front of a ship, but they do not look into the distance. They cannot announce directions nor choose them. Their concern, their responsibility, the reason for the equipment they use is the rapids where one can be smashed to pieces, the rocks that one can hit, the sandbanks where one can run aground. Their knowledge stems from the experience of a past that tells of

> the danger of rivers, of their deceptive currents, of their seductive eddying. The question of urgency poses itself for the sounder of the depths as it does for everybody else, but his or her proper question is and has to be: 'can one pass through here, and how?'. - whatever the urgency, whatever the 'we have to' or the direction chosen may be» (Capitalist Sorcery, Breaking the Spell, p.8, 2011).

Amateur journalists, incompetent film-makers, hypotechnological community managers, we have therefore started listening, recording, editing and distributing some conversations, in an attempt to compose a common and continuous experience: situated knowledge that helps us to decipher what imperceptible political practices are emerging in this context.

Through digital platforms we discussed, with free software plug-ins we recorded, with private packages we made home-made edits of the words we collected. And now we are starting to leave them free to circulate on the internet, discovering again all the difficulties of sailing by sight, between the algorithms of big social networks and the material difficulties of independent networks of discussion and digital production.

At the same time, we have found and populated a space of collaboration with Radio Fragola Gorizia, a project that was born in the context of the free radios of the 1980s and in particular in the Basaglian process of emancipation in mental health, and with Entrar Afuera, a translocal militant research collective that has been dealing with the relationship between health, care and public policies for a long time.

These collaborations are the way we escape confinement on a daily basis, the way we produce constraints and care processes, in which

we discuss who to interview, what to ask, how to edit. They allow us to build a collective space for discussion, transcription and editing. And they are also the community that is active to subtitle and translate the interviews, a fundamental tool to open our discussion to others. Because only by snooping around and thinking together we will perhaps be able to face the world that awaits us at the end of the quarantine.