

TURIN



Marinella Senatore, *It's time to go back to street*, 2019, graphite and charcoal on paper, 8 1/4 × 11 3/4". From the series "It's time to go back to street," 2019–.

Marinella Senatore

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The body as a political and poetic medium is central to Marinella Senatore's practice. In 2012 she founded the School for Narrative Dance, a cost-free and nomadic institution based on storytelling and a horizontal system of learning. Following an open call and a series of workshops, her projects usually conclude with an art object, a film, or, most frequently, a street procession. The creative flow is made up of assonances and dissonances brought about by participating groups, free to express themselves in an extremely wide range of disciplines, among them dance, slam poetry, parkour, village music bands, calligraphy, street art, synchronized swimming, crafts, and more.

Anyone can participate in Senatore's projects by responding to one of her open calls. The organization of her projects is the most political aspect of her work. She maps out a territory, conducts interviews, assembles a team of locals, tracks down ethnic and political minorities, and investigates the languages, dialects, and forms of communication to be adopted—the best means for reaching the greatest number of people, groups, and associations. Senatore calculates that over the past sixteen years she has involved more than six million people in twenty-three countries. Her principal prerequisites entail, conspicuously, the presence of vernacular culture, as well as the inclusion of local activist groups fighting for equality, gender issues, and civil rights.

Clearly, the a posteriori narration of such complex and vital performative events is always a challenge, which the artist has to take into consideration to avoid creating contradictions between the genuine artistic intention of her community-engaged projects and the way they are received. In her recent show, “Make It Shine,” Senatore seemed to have resolved the problem by putting into practice the teaching of Jacques Rancière: Like the participants, she herself ends up becoming an “emancipated spectator” of the performances in her projects, an active interpreter who renders her own translation and who ultimately creates her own story out of it. In the more than one hundred works on view in the exhibition, which the artist described as “a sort of autobiographical journey,” Senatore freely combined her own private passions and manual abilities with elements from her archive of participatory projects, including collective works, photographs, banners, installations, and verbal and formal citations of texts shared during the workshops.

For example, in the drawing series “It’s time to go back to street,” 2019–, Senatore starts from photos or frames taken from video documentation of her projects to portray, in a sort of post-socialist realism, the people involved in her parades and, at the same time, to revisit and elaborate on the significance of her practice in public spaces. In one drawing, she superimposes a chorus of feminist activists, the Ladyfest choir, performing in the parade she organized for Sweden’s Göteborg Biennale in 2016, on a score in the kinetographic notation of Rudolf Laban. Senatore’s translation of the event focuses on harmony in music and on the body’s movements.

On the ground floor of the gallery, viewers encountered a previously unseen group of works that revisit *luminarie*—ephemeral lightbulb-studded constructions traditional in southern Italy—that the artist has often used in her public projects. The ones shown here incorporated slogans such as Judith Butler’s BODIES IN ALLIANCE, Robert Ingersoll’s WE RISE BY LIFTING OTHERS, and Samuel Beckett’s DANCE FIRST, THINK LATER. Traditional *luminarie* can be enormous, but Senatore’s are bright and colorful talismans that propagate messages of joyful celebration and social aggregation on a domestic scale.

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

— Veronica Santi