

Bora Petkova
Light Spot
2010

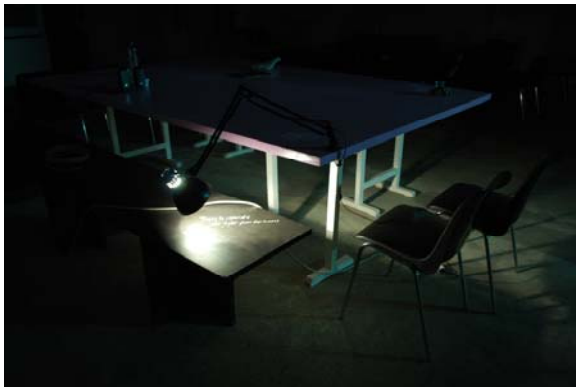
Site specific work in process

Light Spot is a project I started during my participation in the UNIDEE in Residence Program in Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto in Biella, Italy. The project so far has two parts: first one was staged in the spaces of Cittadellarte in Biella, followed by development in La Pigna, San Remo, after the invitation of Pigna Mon Amour Association for realization of a project concerning the specifics in status, environment and the residents of La Pigna.

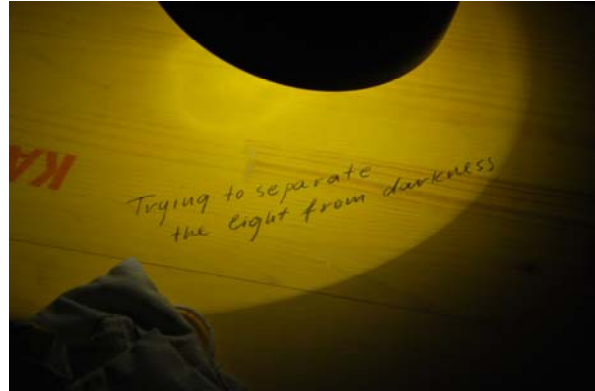
Part 1

Light spot began as site specific non object work in process about my perception for working and living in a common space and the correlation between personal positioning and a given environment. I refer to the status of the individual, simultaneously participating in the “common current habitat” and assembling a unique selection, which constructs ones own ambient. Working in an open studio I got the notion that the interior is rich in places and details, I call “in between” places. Often these micro detailed locations are positioned between the larger surfaces and bigger space volumes, and thus hidden from the general view.

My intervention on these “in between”, found common and individual working places aims to disconnect them from their subjective to the general space status, using light and text as tools and thus to turn them into autonomous light points which extracts and focuses these unpopular, yet familiar detailed parts of the whole.



Another aspect of the work is the subjective interpretation of the working process itself. Intervening on the parts of the space with more common use, I tried to reveal a different notion for reality, transformed to extraordinary one, due to personal position affecting the status quo. In this part of the project, I tried to make a non object narrative connection between the individual working areas and the larger scale indoor “ambient landscapes”.



Part 2

The invitation from Pigna Mon Amour Association gave me the opportunity to further develop *Light Spot* in site specific work in process, in which through personal contact with the residents of La Pigna in San Remo, Italy, learning about their individual life experience there, I could understand better the present situation. When the association invited the residents of Cittadellarte to live and work in La Pigna, we had scattered peaces of information and no life experience from the place, no contact with the people who live there also.

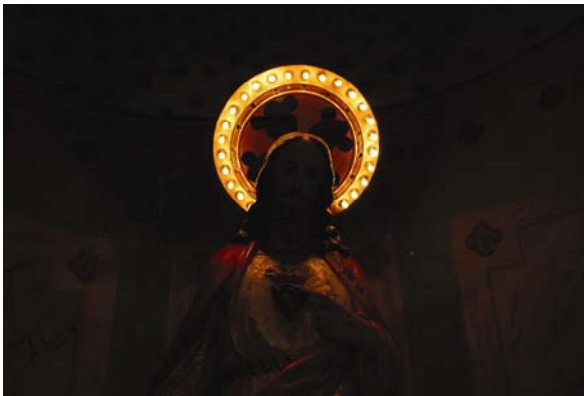
My Idea was to transform *Light Spot* from a mute, Meta language installation, to a situation which aims to create a personal investigation in the life of La Pigna beyond the tourist interest. This approach to an existing realm was completely new for me, I didn't had much experience with involving people to participate in my work, and in this case they were suppose not to participate but namely to create it. At one point, I lost the awareness and the confidence in my ability even to explain the project and to set a plan for realizing it in La Pigna. Another main problem for me was the language, for I can not speak Italian.

All I had were pictures from the place, information from internet and my project.



Copy writes Alessandro Mammone

On the second meeting with Pigna Mon Amour Association I had to explain the work I intend to do in La Pigna, with all the missing, undefined and drifting details, I wasn't shore of. I wasn't aware if I can explain that the work has its own will, pace and time I have to follow and it is not always me who makes the decisions. There are also external, not only rational factors which determine the way it goes, thou I can influence on it with my intentions and thoughts. The meeting was incredible experience for me, because the intimate approach to people I was looking for in my work was understood and I had one name: Francesca, she was considered the right person to make the connection between the residents of La Pigna and me. I appreciate the understanding the association lent about the many uncertain sides in my work, that were about to depend on the possibilities the project can obtain from the reality in La Pigna. I started my work by photographing the city under the sun light which creates complex light and shadow compositions, the architecture, the ambient and the climate it creates in the full covered alleys, small squares and terraced houses. I discovered a controversial city, a place of silence and closed houses and the same time place of the always open doors. I always had the sense of people's presence behind the doors and walls either because of their voices or just a hand, appeared to close or open a window cover in the silence of the afternoon. There was a constant ambiguous feeling for the impossibility of isolation of the privet life and a vast distance between me and these people, sometimes even between them. I was looking for the natural sunlight and the man made light just like it is so typical for some of the passages in the city, I was looking for the notion of light in the churches of La Pigna, where the natural sunlight and the man made one exist simultaneously in cervices of practical needs and the depiction of the celestial power.



Yet the city was locked to me, I understood the complexity of approaching people in direct contact, even more when there is suspense about my reasons. Through the last century the abandonment of buildings, migrant waves, the political and government negligence, the low renting prices in combination with drug distribution and La Pigna's specific infrastructure and architecture, creates an insecure environment, isolation and lack of social relations.

I was surprised when on my first meeting with Francesca, after explaining to her the idea of the project, she said that we can try to meet some people and just rang on a door.

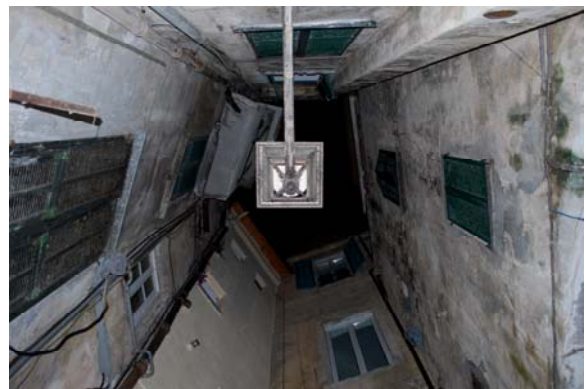


We kept trying this way and it happened to be gladly accepted by some and refused to talk with from others. During my work in *Light Spot*, I used a small desk lamp, installing it as a repeating symbol connecting all the locations-public and private, starting from my room and desk, to the people's houses in La Pigna.



In the beginning of the meetings I was explaining the whole story about *Light Spot*, how I relate it to La Pigna, what is the meaning of the lamp. From the start people were distanced, doubting and asking about my reasons and goal. The photos and recorded conversations, made while the meetings, I consider as a compass of the peoples memory for "the gone" and their vision about "to come" for their neighborhood. I learned the story of the family house of Barbara and Massimiliano from four generations back, and how they reformed it for their needs, keeping the memory and architecture signs from the past. Why they don't feel safe about leaving their children to play on the street and how the face of childhood in La Pigna has changed through the years. What are Lorena's reasons to move from San Remo to La Pigna. How Giuseppe and Matilde manage to keep their strong, high spirit through the years.

What Giorgio remembers about his childhood while singing a child song-game, which I remember we use to sing when I was a child....I saw a different La Pigna after he led me through the streets, explaining me about the history, architecture and restoration of the houses in La Pigna, in counter with the lack of any government investments in this historical place, the abandonment of the buildings by their owners and the new arrival inhabitants. How the different sides of the migration had influenced the city forming a multicultural, multilayered dwelling.



What people think about the municipality's attitude of discard about the problems in La Pigna, parallel to their love, emotional, physical and spiritual attachment and belonging to the place? How Pigna Mon Amour Association tries to regain the social relations and life in public spaces through outdoor activities like cinema and public library.



I came to the point that what is related to the idea of light is not just the ability of seeing the visible world, it is not the source of light itself and it is not the reflected light also....

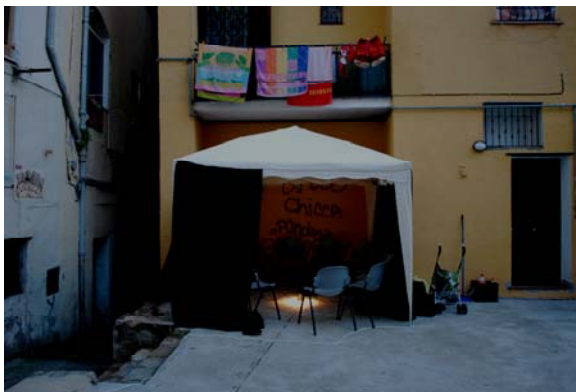
How to define the notion of light in all the aspects it assumes?

In the beginning of my work in La Pigna I noticed that the historical landmark plates are also written in Braille. I thought that being able to see is not enough to go beyond the perception of “postcard image” of La Pigna. Maybe different kind of senses, approach and knowledge is needed to start to see.

Not only had the infrastructure bore the sense of heavy labyrinth knot, but all the layers of history, architecture and people presence I could see. The new image of La Pigna I started to construct while living and working there is not enough to say that I know something, but It's the contact with people I met there, one that reduce the distance and blindness. I was happy to feel the change in my perceptions about the place, and the change in the people's attitude to unknown person in my face.

Light Spot so far has no practical result beside the completely different artistic and relation experience I had. There were people who skeptically asked if there will be visible, physical result from the project, I couldn't answer positive, but I confirm that there is emotional and spiritual transformation in the reality from a photographed to experienced one.

Now I personally know people beyond the walls of La Pigna.



I see *Light Spot* as project which developed my artistic practice expanding the perimeter of communications. My idea was to introduce the people I had talked with to each other, on an announced event on the Piazza di Santa Brigida. Most of them came to the place of the meeting in time they could afford, so the big meeting didn't happen in the end.

I wish I could spend more time in this place, for building the relations we started..., it takes time for the light to travel through space and become visible.

I am grateful to the people who agreed to participate in *Light Spot*, accepting me in their houses and sharing with me their soul and knowledge about the different faces of La Pigna, to Francesca and Alessandro for being with me at all the meetings and helping me with the contact and translation, to Pigna Mon Amour Association for the invitation and hospitality.