

SCINTILLIO E CENERE SPARKLING AND ASH

The city of Taranto and the steel works of ILVA

Artistic strategies through an “uncomfortable” symbol of the city.
Its contradictions, answers... and questions.

By Stefano Cagol

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Performative interactions by Valentina Vetturi

Castello Aragonese, Taranto
Apulia, Italy
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Artists: Stefano Cagol, Corpicrudi, Gints Gabrans, Eduardo Kaç, Andrei Molodkin, Valentina Vetturi, Pippa Bacca, Matteo Basilé, Gregorio Botta, Gao Brothers, Maurizio Cannavacciuolo, David Claerbout, Ileana Florescu, Silvia Moro, Moataz Nasr, Cesare Pietroiusti, Bernardita Rakos, Michal Rovner, Gaia Scaramella

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The starting point is given by the name's Greek origin: ILVA. **The name of the huge (the biggest in Europe) steelworks hanging over Taranto, Apulia, South Italy: *aethalia* contains the opposite meanings of sparkling and ash, in Italian *scintillio e cenere*.**

Lightness and soot, light and opacity. A clear antithesis summarizing in just one word all the contradictions of the territory, its history, its present. Stefano Cagol – by following his own artistic modalities – starts from this name / symbol of the town, and progresses to viewpoints and new reading keys through an articulated project that involves the population in various ways and with communication methods typical of propaganda. **He invites people to take an active part in the creative process of the artwork**, and to ask themselves questions on the reality that surrounds them.

The artist invited people to set themselves in front of a choice between sparkling and ash. He reaches his aim through a series of standing and traveling actions (with the participation of Valentina Vetturi) that directly involve the inhabitants, like a gazebo, posters to invite people to partake, to enter the project and to think, and to act.

The first part of the project dealt with a ‘propaganda’ that stimulated reflection and re-action. It used a series of posters printed in silver, mirroring, and in the middle the questions: sparkling? ash? employment? health? Nature? steelworks? production? shortage? status quo? change tradition? innovation? oblivion? reflection? accumulation? remains? light? fire?...

The posters were hung in the streets, in bars. To mirror and ask ourselves questions. and to inform about time and places of the standing and traveling action (of 2 days).

He asked the population to find and bring him glittering objects (against soot). A call open to the spectator's will, free to choose whatever glittering he owns, be it dressing tables, broken mirrors, lamps, tinfoil, pieces of aluminium, glasses, bottles... but also an old T-shirt with sequins.

Like magpies, they had to find all what sparkles and stock it, materialize and give form to light. They had to become aware of all the light on their territory, of their culture, of the sun reflected on the sea, of the radiant illuminations of the village festivals.

With the elements thus gathered, the artist composed a landscape of flashes, a sparkling monument inside the castle. A sort of sacrificial altar, a kind of monument that will reflect, like a mirror, the surrounding reality.

But it is ‘probably’ be destined to be made opaque by the ash and the dusts in the air of Taranto, according to an alliance still ‘maybe’ inevitable...

Indeed outside the castle a 4 x 6 meter flag on a 12 meter pole hangs over the “monument of light.” It is characterized in the center by just one word: **CENERE (ASH).**

As part of this wide project based on the spontaneous involvement of people, two videos inside the castle distill and emphasize the reality of Taranto and of ILVA, the essence, the developments, and the results of the project.

Taranto, narrowed among many questions, Small Sea or Great Sea, Greeks or Swabians.

ILVA has taken and given! ...given jobs to an entire town

The symbol of Italy in its entirety grew and exploded in the postwar period, with environmental parameters that seem absurd now and on which we have to ask ourselves questions!

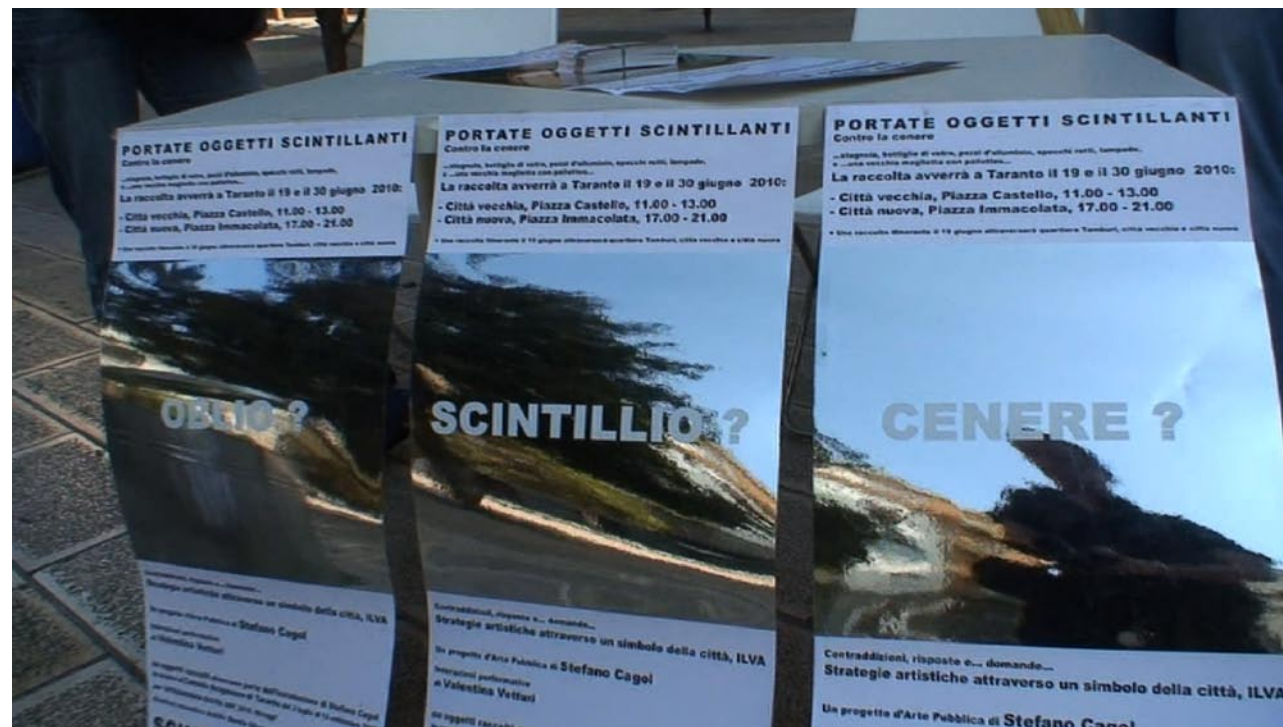


Stefano Cagol, *Scintillio e Cenere (Sparkling and Ash)*, 2010, traveling and standing action collecting sparkling objects from inhabitants of the city, collective sparkling monument, various dimensions, 2 video, 13' x 19' fabric flag, 39' flag pole. In collaboration with Valentina Vetturi. Aragon Castle, Taranto, Italy



A video frame with Taranto and the ILVA steel works

The action with the spontaneous intervention of people and the collaboration of Valentina Vettori



The posters with mirroring questions





Stefano Cagol on a local TV channel, Antenna 100, interviewed about the action for collecting sparkling objects from people



Sparkling objects during the collecting action





The collective sparkling monument realized by the artist in the castle using collected objects





The flag out of the castle







APPENDIX:
PREVIOUS WORKS



Stefano Cagol, *Babylon Zoo*, 2005, rete metallica, catene luminose, scultura in ceramica. Oredaria Arti Contemporanee, Roma



Stefano Cagol, *Flu Game*, 2008, installation, Polymers, industrial scrap, label, environmental dimensions. Mart - Museum of Modern and Contemporary Arte of Trento and Rovereto



Stefano Cagol, *Raw War*, 2008, installation, flag, 6 x 4 m. Umberto the First Fortress, Palmaria Island