

## LA CUCINA DI ELIA

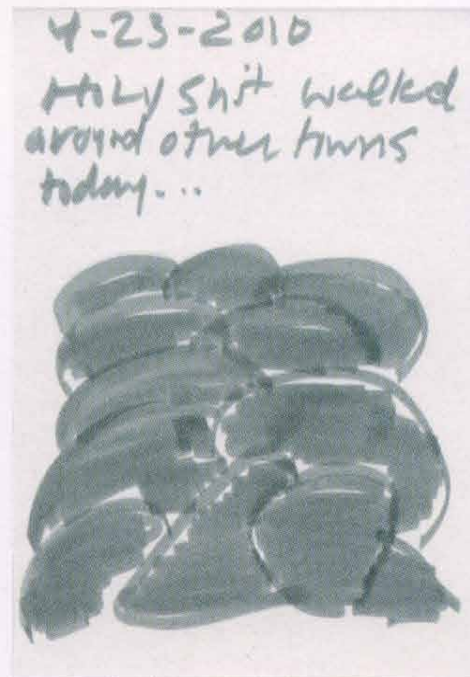
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Quando sono arrivata a Villasor, stavo già lavorando al progetto di fare un disegno al giorno per tutto il 2010. Normalmente disegno quando sono ispirata da qualcosa (per esempio da un viaggio), in questo caso mi interessava notare come sarebbero cambiati i miei disegni se fossi stata "obbligata" a farlo quotidianamente.

Uno dei primi giorni della residenza, abbiamo camminato a lungo per le strade di Villasor. A soli pochi metri dal convento, un uomo di nome Elia ci ha salutati e ha insistito perché andassimo a casa sua. Ci ha portati nel suo garage dove ci ha raccontato come produceva il mirto, ci ha fatti poi accomodare in casa dove è iniziata la degustazione.

Una volta in casa, ho notato le fantastiche piastrelle della sua cucina. Stavo proprio cercando qualcosa di simile! Volevo individuare elementi tipici di Villasor o più in generale della Sardegna, poiché negli scorsi anni ho realizzato diversi lavori basati su materiali di provenienza architettonica.

Ho quindi fotografato le piastrelle della cucina di Elia, ma anche le molte altre trovate nei giorni seguenti, come in una delle tante case dove siamo stati invitati: lì ad esempio c'era un grande mucchio di piastrelle e macerie forse provenienti da una stanza appena ristrutturata; la proprietaria mi ha detto che potevo prendere tutto ciò che mi serviva, ne ho presa una come souvenir.



da sinistra

- Renée Lotenero, 4.14.2010, 2010

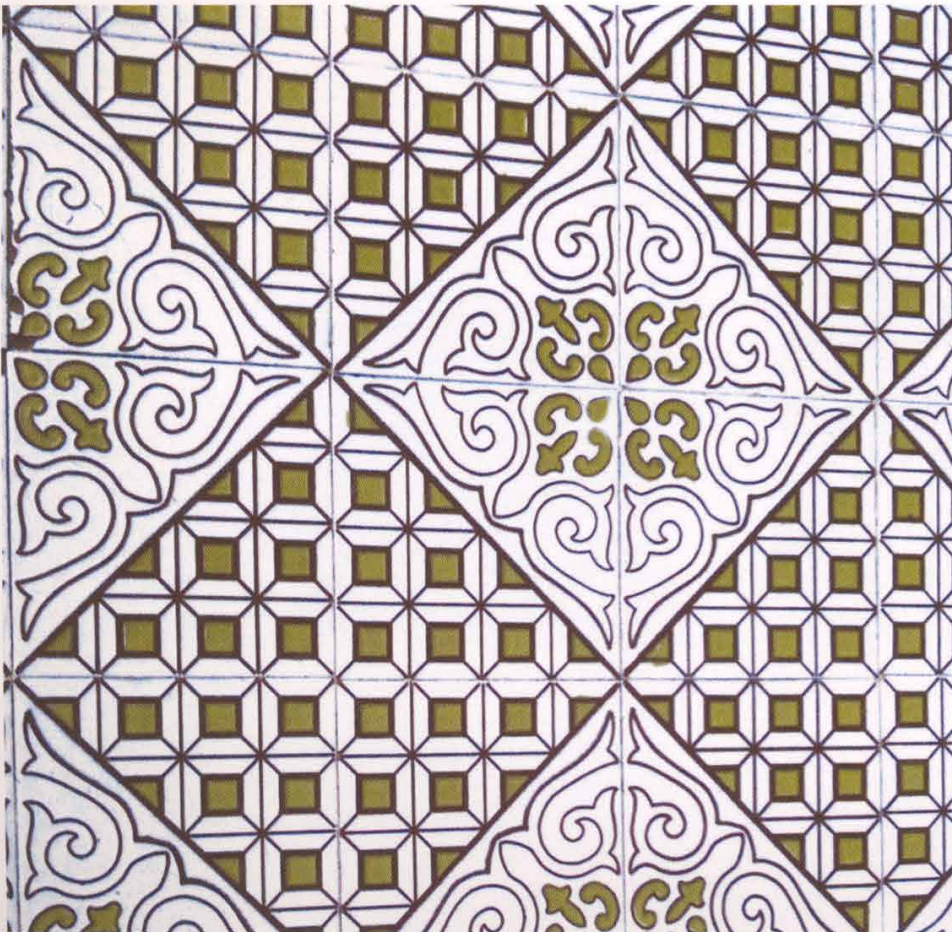
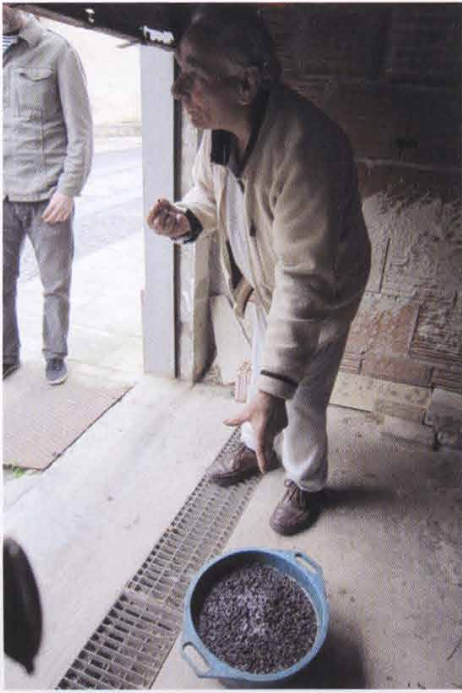
- Renée Lotenero, 4.23.2010, 2010

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Renée Lotenero



dall'alto  
- Renée Lotenero, Elia  
- Renée Lotenero, Piastrelle di  
Via Renzo Cocco





dall'alto

- Renée Lotenero, Il garage di Elia
- Renée Lotenero, Piastrelle foto Luigi Negro

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Dopo aver fatto molti disegni e schizzi, ho deciso di realizzare un lavoro sulla cucina di Elia...dovevo però capire se Elia mi avrebbe permesso di creare un'installazione temporanea a casa sua. Insieme alla mia interprete Beatrice, abbiamo cercato di spiegargli il progetto: ci sarebbe voluta circa un'ora per costruire l'installazione, fotografarla e smantellarla; in cambio gli avremmo dato una copia della fotografia come ricordo... Elia ha accettato! (L'ho ringraziato infinite volte, ma lui continuava a ripetere che non era necessario, per lui era un vero piacere!). Una settimana dopo con mio marito e mio figlio Ethan siamo tornati a casa di Elia per realizzare l'installazione. Con grande cortesia, ci ha accolti alla porta. Questa volta ero senza interprete, abbiamo dovuto fare del nostro meglio per capirci: Elia non parla una parola di inglese e io non vado tanto meglio con l'italiano... Nonostante questi problemi tecnici è stato molto premuroso, ci ha aiutati con le scale e le corde, ha tirato fuori dalla credenza delle buffe tazze (un ricordo del suo matrimonio) e ci ha servito un caffè. Alla fine gli ho offerto di tenere tutta l'installazione o una parte. Gentilmente ha risposto: «No, grazie». Alle pareti mancavano alcune piastrelle, gli ho offerto di rimpiazzarle con alcune delle mie "finte". Ha riso e ha detto: «No, grazie». Allora ho deciso di dargli una fotografia dell'installazione e una delle riproduzioni delle mattonelle. Sul retro ho scritto in italiano: «Grazie mille» e l'ho firmata. Lui l'ha guardata, ha ringraziato ma ha detto: «Non riesco a capire la tua firma...scrivici il nome, così posso ricordarmelo!».

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ELIA MEDDA: Ma tu capisci cosa fa tua madre?  
ETHAN LOTENERO: Sì, sì!  
EM (sorridente): lo invece proprio non lo capisco...

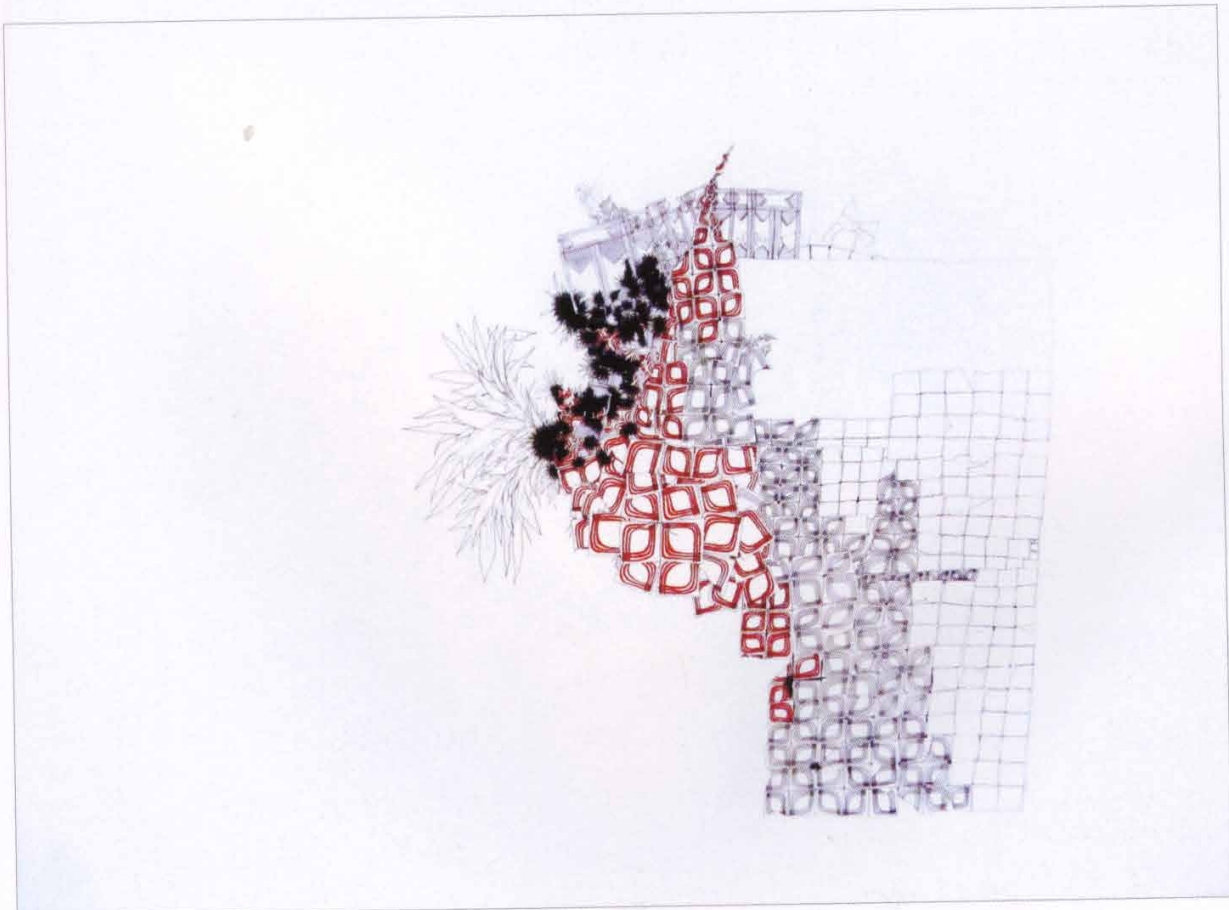
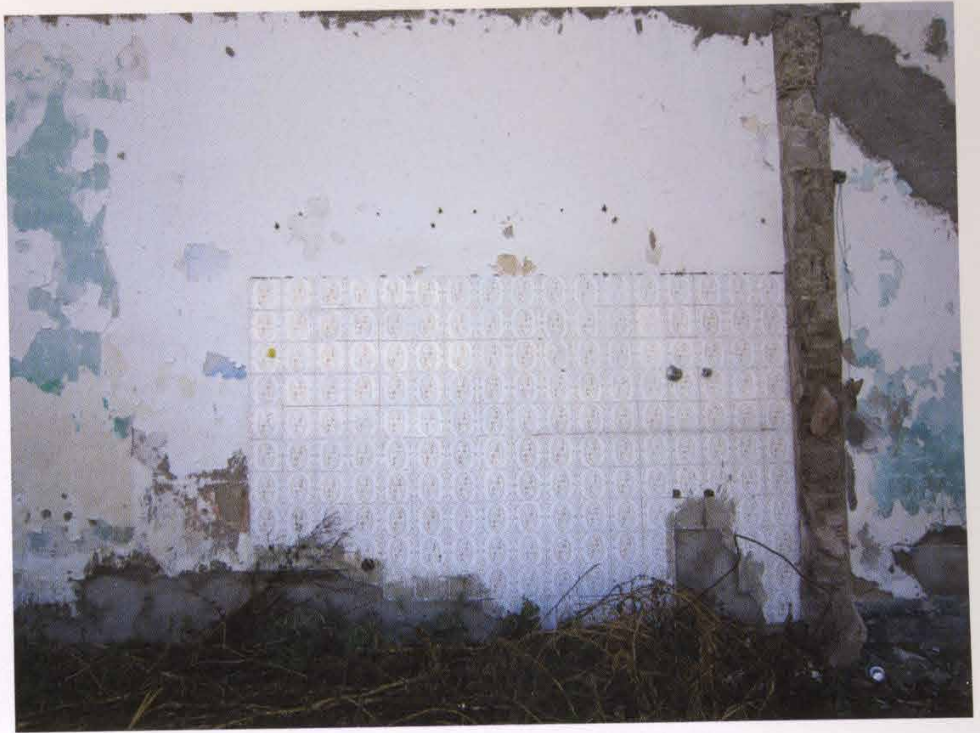
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- Renée Lotenero, Piastrelle in Viale Repubblica
- Renée Lotenero, Piastrelle in Via Serra
- Renée Lotenero, Studio per installazione *La cucina di Elia*, 2010

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VIA ROMA 42. IL TEMPO NON  
 POTRÀ DISTRUGGERE CIÒ  
 CHE L'AFFETTO HA  
 COSTRUITO (ANONIMO)  
 Rita Correddu

The old houses of unfired brick, the gardens in flower behind the front gates, the façade of a house at no. 42, Via Roma. Unplastered fired bricks, embedded in a wall, small holes as places that shelter and speak of life, love, fragility and perhaps poetry.

I decided to take care of this place, to fill its empty spaces with small living creatures. I thought I could plant flowers in them, the same ones that the women cultivated with extreme care in the gardens of their houses. I asked one of them for some small cuttings and followed her instructions about cultivating them on that wall. I tried to get them to grow in that place. I wanted to bring back to life in the present the poetry of the walls of unfired brick, living, only apparently fragile, made by the hands of men who mixed straw and mud in the same way as women used to make bread. Then I went in search of a poet as I still wanted another poem. I set off from Villasor, leaving in the image of a postcard its small gesture and a new place: Via Roma 42.

In the end I found a poet, his voice and one of his poems: it may have been a pretext, or perhaps just the conclusion of my research. In reality in Villasor I felt that I could "read" poems in many of the little things that occurred around this work: in the understanding of Signora Luisa whom I asked for cuttings from her plants; in the curiosity of the inhabitants who watched me watering a wall; in the old stories told me by the elderly residents of the town I met during my search for a poet; in the care with which the befuddled printer prepared the words to engrave on the plaque; in the thoughtfulness shown by Betti, who was more concerned than I was about doing things properly; in the amazement of Signora Luisella and her daughters at seeing their house on a postcard and at having a fine phrase engraved on a brass plaque on the front of that same house; and again

in seeing the poet listening to his poem; in knowing that the sheet of paper on which I had traced one of the bricks of the wall at Via Roma 42 is now framed and hanging on a wall in Jiří Kovanda's house in Prague; in the flowers that have bloomed on Signora Luisa's plants for some months now on Francesca's terrace. Alternate rhymes, short lines, verses. I spent an evening, with the invaluable assistance of Marta Jecu, putting colored dots on 1000 postcards, in the hope that they would be able to say something about these poems...

Extract from the poem *La mia vigna (My Vineyard)* by Angelo Podda (known as Lino)

*Dal fondo della terra mia  
 le tue radici han succhiato.  
 I frutti tuoi hanno soffiato  
 dentro me tanta poesia [...].*

From the bottom of my land  
 your roots have sucked.  
 Your fruits have breathed  
 so much poetry into me [...].

—

COLETTE PODDI: Hi, how are you?

RITA CORREDDU: Hello, well. And you?  
 All of you?

CP: We're fine too, apart from time.

RC: I have to send you some photos.

CP: I have to clean the plaque too.

RC: Here in Bologna luckily it's sunny

CP: It'll be all dirty with this rain...

—

CP: Years ago my father's store was behind that wall. He died when my sister and I were five years old. We didn't have time to get to know him. That façade has always been like that, it's not unfinished: it's just like that.

We've been thinking about fixing it for many years: replacing the rusty rolling shutters and the orange pipes, plastering it, making it look more beautiful. Perhaps we haven't been taking care of it for years, but it's not easy, you don't always have the possibility and the time. We'll start work on it soon. The façade will certainly be different, it'll be strange to see it transformed. But the plaque and that phrase will stay. Above all I'm sure that the memory of my father and every moment spent in his store will hold out against time and the things that inevitably change.

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LA CUCINA DI ELIA  
 Renée Lotenero

While in Villasor I was continuing a project of creating one small sketch a day for the entire year of 2010. I usually sketch when I am inspired about something (i.e. a trip across the US, traveling throughout Europe, etc.). With this project I was interested to see how the drawings would change when I was "forced" to make them daily, as opposed to just at a moment of inspiration.

A few days into the residency we decided to go on a walking tour of Villasor. We were only meters away from the monastery when we were greeted by a man named Elia who lives just two doors down from the monastery. Elia insisted that we come over to his house. He took us into his garage to show us how he made the liqueur called *mirto*, and then the whole group of us piled into his house where he served us some *mirto*!

Once in the house I noticed these amazing tiles in his kitchen... I was definitely keeping an eye out for interesting tiles and architecture unique to Sardinia and to Villasor. (For the past several years I have been creating sculptures, drawings and installations based on the tiles and architecture that I see.) I photographed the tiles in Elia's kitchen, and several others that I found that day and on the following days. After Elia's we were invited into a house that had a huge pile of broken tiles and debris, it looked as if they had just finished remodeling a room in their home. The women who lived there said we could take as many tiles or anything else from the pile that we wanted... so I took just one tile as a souvenir.

After several sketches and drawings I decided to create a piece about Elia's kitchen. The idea was to see if Elia would allow me to create a temporary installation in his home.

With my translator (Beatrice) we headed over to Elia's house and explained the project... I would take about one hour to construct a temporary installation in his kitchen, photograph it and then take it down. In trade I would give him a picture of the piece to keep. Elia agreed to let me do it!

I kept on saying "thank you" to him



for allowing me to do this project in his kitchen. Elia: "you are welcome but there is no reason to thank me! It is my pleasure!"

A week later my husband, twelve-year-old son Ethan and I went back to Elia's house at about 10 am to do the installation. Elia graciously greeted us at the door. This time I did not have a translator with me so I had to do my best to communicate with Elia on my own. (Elia does not speak any English and I speak very little Italian.) He was very attentive and helped us with ladders, extension cords and moving things around. He even got out his very fancy cups from a cabinet in his dining room (I believe he said they were from his wedding) and served us espresso. I had offered the entire installation to Elia if he wanted it, or if he just wanted to keep part of it.

He politely said: "No grazie."

Elia had a few tiles missing from the wall so I also offered him some of the "fake tiles" to fill in the missing pieces. Elia laughed, but said: "No grazie!" In the end I gave him a photograph of the installation and one of the fake tiles. On the back I wrote "grazie mille" and my signature.

Elia looked at it and said thank you, and then said (in Italian): "I cannot read your signature, write your name so that I can read it!"

Elia Medda (in Italian): "Do you understand what your mom does?"

Ethan Lotenero: "Sì, sì, sì!"

EM: (in Italian) and with a smile on his face: "I don't understand it!"

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UNTITLED  
(XEROX LOGBOOK)  
Augusto Buzzegoli

The construction of this installation is like a diary, somewhere between image, text and personal memory, a space to which you can bring your own story, of my experience over these thirty-two days in Villasor. There is, for instance, a day in Villasor for the recycling of flowers: you walk at night and find a lot of flowers, which people put out from the gardens and churchyard and from the houses. So I have brought some of them and blown-

up pictures of them. The process that I have used constantly was to scan and enlarge the printed objects or images repeatedly. Every object has a story and by telling it, you modify the object. Scanning it and then copying it again until it becomes unrecognizable is for me a process that has to do with memory, like telling a story, showing the process of the story.

MARTA JECU: The way the media re-evaluate reality, personal memory, is a filter through which we can conceptualize reality. It offers a visual and sensual representation of reality, structuring it. It connects things, events, feelings and atmospheres on a conceptual basis. For this reason the relevance of transmitting personal memory is that it goes beyond "the personal," the subjective or the particular, since it also contains the paradox of being historical. It can be seen also as an attempt at *architecture*, as it is *constructing* reality.

AUGUSTO BUZZEGOLI: In Villasor I read a novel by one of the first feminist poets in Italy—Sibilla Aleramo. Before the First World War, what she was writing about could not yet be considered a subject. The photo I have used is copied from the cover of the book: in the texture, in the changing shades of gray obtained by copying, slight differences appear, similar to those which appear when a story is retold, a story in which personal thoughts are mingled. At the end of the exhibition I also put a sort of tribute to other artists who have influenced me a lot: the piece of paper on which Gilbert and George wrote "Fuck the teacher" specially for me at one of their press conferences in Berlin.

MJ: Through the alteration of the spatial continuum in which an object is situated, new functions of the objects come out. The intervention in the environment of an object or the fracturing of the identity of the object itself, by reloading it, can find its extreme form in the complete *destruction* of the "object of art"—a long tradition, connected more with progress than with annihilation, which denies the authority of "models."

AB: In another image I have deleted with a marker the written text from a Sardinian newspaper as an allusion

to Radical Architecture, a short-lived Italian movement very close to Arte Povera: they took books and deleted their content, line by line, and then transposed it onto a huge scale, for instance on canvas. We speak about a story and we speak about contemporary art history. But I do not intend to insist on these links. It's just my personal memory in which all of these elements are to be found, but if you, as a spectator, visit them, you can find new connections between these parts, maybe even involuntary ones.

MJ: Since the document is supposed to substitute something that is definitely missing from a (collective) memory, its nature remains mysterious, its effects unpredictable and, being a foreign element in a context, the changes that it brings will be belated, if not completely outside the time limit. The document is participating in the present, but is completely artificial. It can hardly represent a process. For that reason, the work as a document can be at any point on a timescale.

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(EN)COUNTER SHOTS  
Beatrice Catanzaro

In the spring of 2010, at the request of a sheep farmer in Villasor (southern Sardinia, Italy) an international group of ten visual artists created a 35-meter-long mural in less than eighteen days.

The project evolved out of a chance encounter between Beatrice Catanzaro, Markuz Wernli Saitô and sheep farmer Agostino Nonnis and his family. The final mural was realized collectively by Chiara Agnello, Marika Asatiani, Simone Bertuzzi, Rupen Boyadjian, Augusto Buzzegoli, Giulia Casula, Beatrice Catanzaro, Rita Correddu, Estelle Deschamps, Gogi Dzodzuashvili, Ethan Lotenero, Renée Lotenero, Markuz Wernli Saitô, Yuka Saitô, Francesca Sassu, Steve Siegrist and Simone Trabucchi.

We got lost on our bicycles amidst the artichoke fields of Villasor as we started to follow the fighter jets flying over our heads. That's how we suddenly sighted a flock of sheep next to a NATO base. A young man—later we understood it was Cristiano, the shepherd who helped Nonnis with