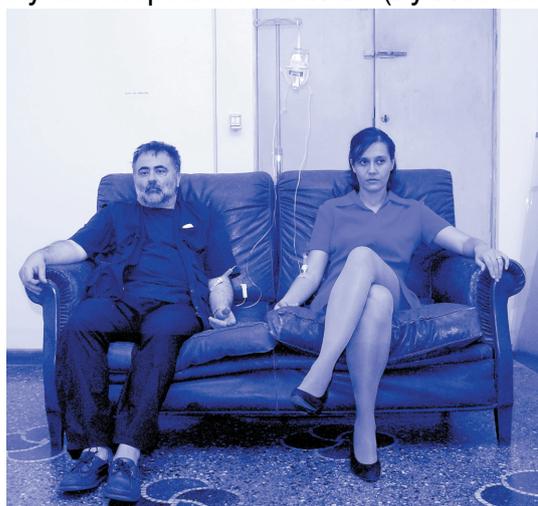


Giuliano Galletta (born Sanremo, 1955), began his operations in Genoa in the mid 1970s while at college, by staging his play, "L'insostituibile Calogero" (The irreplaceable Calogero), a sort of baroque musical influenced by the Brechtian theatre and by authors such as Arrabal and Gombrowicz. In that early work, one could already see the antecedents - mainly in the staging and in the direction – of some of the topics that the artist would later develop by other means, such as visual writing, setting (always characterised in his works by strong scenographic elements) and performance.

During the next few years, while reading philosophy at the university and attending classes given by Edoardo Sanguineti, he also began working in journalism – a field that later became his profession. He initially worked for the new private radios headed by the student movements of 1977 and which were referred to as “free”. His career in journalism developed as he worked for several daily newspapers before he settled down at Il Secolo XIX, for which he wrote a front-page column called “Twenty lines” from 2001 to 2005. This popular column received the Saint Vincent Prize for Journalism - a reward which was handed over to him by Italy’s president Carlo Azeglio Ciampi in December 2004.

Giuliano Galletta’s artistic activities always continue parallel to his journalism, and from 1975/1976 his interests moved from the theatre to a more philosophical, literary and visual field. The most formative experience of these years was his discovery of the multiform situational area; the influence of the poet Sanguineti and of the themes of Italian experimental writers Manganelli, Arbasino and Emilio Villa are also important. Other essential influences are the critical theory of society developed in Frankfurt (by Adorno and others), as well as Barthes, Baudrillard and Beckett.



Galletta’s work is always strengthened by a consciousness of the theoretical and philosophical problems connected to aesthetic effectiveness, which become an integrating and inseparable part of the work itself. To this end, Galletta revises in an independent way some of the topics of conceptual art. From a stylistic point of view, between 1975 and 1978, Galletta worked on the relationship between word and image, following the direction of the visual-poetic research which

emerged in Genoa in the 1950s in the work of Martino Oberto, and began collaborating with artist Rolando Mignani. During these years, his interest in writing led Galletta to the philosopher Jacques Derrida, who became the subject of his degree thesis. Galletta moved his attention from the already consolidated stylistic elements of visual poetry to anthropological and narrative elements (connectable in some respects to Narrative Art), concentrating from the start on the issue of the identity of the artist and on the impossibility of diary and autobiography. The result of this work is "Romanzo visivo" (Visual Novel), "tous jours", published in 1978 by Libreria Editrice Sileno. The book has an introduction by Carlo Romano, an eclectic essayist and protagonist of the Italian underground, as well as the owner, with his brother Mario, of the Sileno bookshop in Galleria Mazzini, Genoa, for more than 20 years a center for the Genoese counterculture. The collaboration and friendship between Galletta and Romano continues to the present, as does his friendship with Sandro Ricaldone, a critic who has consistently followed Galletta's work. Romano, Ricaldone and Galletta founded in 1984 the "Office for Research and Documentation of the Imagination" – whose archives, library and centre of documentation were initially situated in an apartment in Fossatello in Genoa, and later moved to Uscio. Today they can be found on the internet in the website "Biblioteca dell'egoista" (Egotist's Library).

The literary critic Giuseppe Zuccarino wrote in 1978: "tous jours is an unusual object that stimulates an interpretation while rejecting a definition. It is clearly similar to some of the products of visual writing or narrative art, but it cannot be entirely connected to any of these aesthetic activities. It could be compared to the "libro-almanacco" (book-almanac) which, according to the unique point of view of Dominique Noguez "will very soon revolutionize (if it hasn't already) the dying form of the novel and the distribution (in every meaning of the word) of the genre". From then on, the confusion between genres, but also between social identities and functions, became the focal topic of Galletta's work, to the point of shedding doubt on the very concepts of work and author. This makes it difficult for the audience, as well as for the critic, to define the work according to established patterns, its status as product and consequently its presence on the art market.

After "tous jours" (the book was also sent to Roland Barthes who replied with a kind message written in green ink on official College de France headed paper, "merci pour le photoman reussi, merci d'avoir pensée a moi. RB"), Galletta's work moved on to concentrate on scenery and on action.

His performances are rarely public but are documented by pictures and videos which, once modified (in some cases with small artistic touches), become objects to be inserted in sceneries, a midway between scenography and furnishing. The latter are then recorded in their new environments and enter a continuous - the work in progress as the progression of the work - and potentially interminable (like a Freudian analysis) flux of communication and, in a way, of counter-narration.

The first work to be built on this model (or anti-model) adopted by Galletta, was "Fontane" (Fountains) in 1979, staged in the same year at the Falcone Theatre in Genoa during the exhibition "Lo spazio dei gesti" (The space of gestures) supervised by Vana Conti - the first critic to be involved with Galletta's work. Giovanni A. Bignone and Rolando Magnani (with whom Galletta collaborated in the months before) also had parts in the play as did Aurelio Caminati, Beppe Dellepiane, Angelo Pretolani.

In "Fontane" Galletta worked around the idea of ornament/monument - as well as with the scenery (within the exhibition space was the reconstruction of a real fountain) - with the film

“Deriva” (Drift), inspired by the situational psycho-geography. Together with a series of pictures connected to quotations, for the first time, after a brief introduction, “Resti” (Remains) was shown - a black and white 100x70 format picture in which the artist leans against a breached wall of the historical centre with his face cancelled by a cross in red paint.

The picture, today in the Contemporary Art Museum of Villa Croce, attracted the interest of the art historian Corrado Maltese who spoke about it in 1980 during a conference about art in Genoa held at Palazzo Tursi. “Resti” gave rise to four pictures in the same format composing a sort of small, parody theatre in which mournful elements are mixed with ideology and maquillage. The complete series was shown in 1981 at the modern art gallery of Bologna within the exhibition “Lavori in corso” (Work in progress), supervised by Rossana Bossaglia and Guido Giubbini. As Bossaglia wrote in the introduction of the catalogue “Galletta uses photography as an instrument to depersonalize and to change the subject into object”.

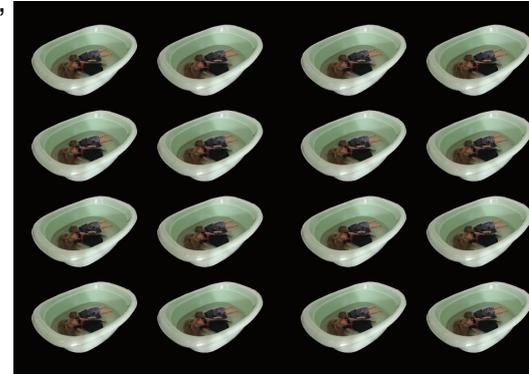
The year 1981 was important for the artist’s career as he moved to New York for a long stay with his friend Paolo Prato. This experience gave him the chance to visit galleries and museums and to meet artists and intellectuals – amongst whom Peter Carravetta and Luigi Ballerini, both poets and literary critics. In this period the first and last number of the magazine “Stato inferno” (Inflicted state of being) was published, produced by Mignani and Zuccarino, dedicated to the theme of the “aesthetic job and the division of labour”. In November the exhibition “Mon coeur mis à nu” opened at Armando Battelli’s “Arteverso” gallery, the first of the rare partnerships that Galletta has had within the private gallery system. On the exhibition Viana Conti wrote a long review published by the daily newspaper l’Unità: “The objects that we find in the gallery are the ones we find in our everyday life. They are semiologically chosen as symbols of our social differences and are distributed in the scenery under a syntax which explains the different categories of the habitat”. And moreover, “These “diverted” objects do not exhibit their aura but whatever comes from the context which overwhelms them, and in which, even the colour red, in its mummifying functions, becomes anaemic”. The scenery of “Mon coeur mis à nu” was also documented in a 16 mm film. In the 80’s Galletta intensified his journalistic activities; however this didn’t prevent him from operating in the artistic field and from planning exhibitions which never seem to get staged for logistic and organizational reasons. His participations in two important events were particularly remarkable: in 1985 “Pittura 70/80” (Painting 70/80) edited by Sandro Ricaldone (C.A.L.A. Fieschi, Sestri Levante), and in 1986 “Giovani pittori in Liguria” (Young painters in Liguria) edited by Guido Giubbini (Contemporary Art Museum of Villa Croce, Genoa). The year 1985 also saw the staging of performance “Gli occhiali di mio padre” (My father’s glasses), set up in the halls of the former psychiatric hospital in Quarto, following the suggestions of Claudio Costa and Luisella Carretta. Of the work Romano writes: “One of the artist’s works that we recently viewed had a strong gloomy atmosphere about it; however this was not caused by the presence of a black drape resembling an obituary furnishing. Nor was it for the hall of the former psychiatric hospital which lacked the vital breath that must have been exhaled even in the odour of madness (this is the height of ambiguity!) – and which, furthermore, appeared close to a ruin (...) The delivery did not seem to have caused pain, the course of existence was outlined in an ephemeral way like all the vernissage works. At its death, in the end, the gravedigger’s exhortation sounded as light as those of the faithless: ‘bury it quickly’.”

The year 1988 was marked by a remarkable event, when in a personal retrospective in Studio Gennai in Pisa with a series of showcases, Galletta’s work was introduced by an enlightening

text of Ricaldone: "The author reifies and evocates himself in an ironic way through his own image, marking in the "multiplication of the figure" the role of absence which he intends to play. A role that even if "it tries to move the language from the place in which it is found" (Esterhazy), and if it could make the most of all the contradictory issues and falsification, it could not grant space to ambiguity but to a disguised, dramatic component instead. Such is the wish to create the work within the aesthetic conventions and the deliberate will of making it an ornament of consciousness that, as Lea Meandri wrote: "Pleasure is an unforgivable distraction for whoever is forced to watch upon his own death to feel alive."

The Nineties began with a complex work: "Appunti per la casa pericolosa" (Notes for the dangerous house) and the subsequent publication of a plaquette of poetic texts, "Un impossibile giorno" (An impossible day) published by Sileno. In these "notes" Galletta succeeded in working on the idea of the house by building three scenes in three different rooms and using a corridor as a scenario as well as for a "private" performance. The exhibition was set up in the apartment of the cultural association "Le arie del tempo", founded and animated by Luisella Carretta. In the catalogue Ricaldone wrote: "A purely inconsistent sequence which abstains itself from prizing on the irrelevance of the combinations in order to surprise, creating a brief and traumatic drift, and limits itself instead to signal a state of danger or intolerance (...) while, at the same time, outlining a beckettian catalogue of "unbearable things", which keep us connected to the worlds we relate to and to which we dare hope not to belong to".

On this occasion the critic Matteo Fochessati wrote: "Galletta's artistic tale is structured through different stages diversified in regards to the ambles of participation. It proposes itself as a tale of the dispersion of the subject in a field of a cultural imaginary which reifies itself in images and things in substitution of the virtual protagonist, the ego of the artist."



In '93 Galletta staged, in the Alaya Studio of Vittoria Gualco, another scenery with the title of "Mentre dormivo" (Whilst I slept). In 1995 he published a small anthology entitled "Delirium Stabile" (Stable delirium) in the premises of the restaurant "Il capovolto", with a brief introduction by Leo Sarastro (pseudonym used by the artist), which stated: "The echo of the submitted weeping (or of the suppressed laughter) which stems from these works should not be underestimated. We do not know the identity of sorrow, and the author (if we could put it this way) doesn't help us in discovering it. He walks on a suspended thread and whichever way he falls his destiny is already written. There is no question about reaching the other side. It is too far. From this point of view, time plays a big role but Galletta doesn't seem to worry about it. He waits for the false move with the restless tranquillity of the commuter. He observes his companions travellers and he is touched by such fun."

Still in 1995 he published the play "Il televisore. Dal totem casalingo alla realtà

virtuale" (Television. From home-totem to virtual reality) in the column "Gli oggetti del secolo" (The objects of the century), conceived by Gianluca Triviero for Gribaudo editions. In 1997 he wrote "Adriano Sansa, cittadino e sindaco" (Adriano Sansa, citizen and Mayor), published by De Ferrari. During the same years he collaborated with the artist, editor and graphic Francesco Pirella to whom he dedicates several critical essays, one of these the introduction to "Manuale dell'antilibro" (The handbook of the anti-book), published by Marietti.

Between the end of 2001 and the first half of 2002 he produced for the broadcasting channel 'Telecittà' twenty-four television interviews with Edoardo Sanguineti which are to be found in the volume: "Sanguineti/Novecento. Conversazioni sulla cultura del ventesimo secolo" (Sanguineti/Nine Hundred. Conversations on 20th century culture), published by Melangolo. In 2004 he published, in collaboration with the experimental printing workshop of Armus, the archive and museum of printing founded by Francesco Pirella - the anti-book "Almanacco di un altro anno" (Almanac of another year) an analysis of the stages of his nearly thirty-years of creative activity, through texts, documents, pictures and quotes. The Almanac was presented in October 2005 at the Contemporary Art Museum of Villa Croce by Sandra Solimano, director of the museum, Carlo Romano, Sandro Ricaldone, Giuseppe Zuccarino and Riccardo Manzotti, expert in robotics and artificial knowledge. On that occasion Galletta gave the performance "Tavola di San Giorgio" (Saint George's Table) during which the audience was involved.