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Lavanderia a Vapore

**What if art is not only a
reflection of the world,
but a rehearsal for its
transformation?**

Over the past two years, within the framework of *On Mobilisation*, Lavanderia a Vapore focused on care as a possible form of togetherness—a way to reweave the social body through mediating forms that tend to the crises of our time. *On Mobilisation of Care* prototyped methodologies that mobilised care through bodies, relationships, and non-normative forms of learning. It demonstrated that care is not simply a theme, but a practice—a political, poetic, and transformative force for reimagining how we come together.

The collaboration with artists Elisabetta Consonni and Daniele Ninarello moved beyond a service-based relationship, engaging instead in active dialogue that led to co-creation and co-curation. This process also supported the development of their artistic

trajectories and reflected a shift in institutional practice toward shared authorship.

Public events were shaped through curatorial strategies and methodologies that mobilised both people and forms of knowledge often marginalised by official educational structures. Lavanderia a Vapore was transformed into a temporary commons—a space shared and inhabited by an active, engaged community of participants and visitors, opening new perspectives for institutional practices.

Structured across talks, workshops, performances, and participatory formats, the project served as a fertile training ground for artistic strategies aimed at generating change. These strategies, rooted in embodied urgency, intervened in the political sphere and emerged as potential catalysts for transformation.

These formats functioned as laboratories that investigated how artistic practices can mobilise bodies, awaken critical thought, and expand imaginative and affective capacities—both individually and collectively. At its core was a shared inquiry: *How can we assemble as a collective able to remake the present through alternative, artistic strategies and sensibilities?*

Inspired by the ancient Greek concept of the symposium as a convivial site of embodied knowledge exchange, Lavanderia a Vapore reimaged these gatherings as immersive, sensory experiences,

where thinking through the body and activating all senses offered an aesthetic and political method for knowing and acting. True to its mission as a center for dance research, Lavanderia re-centred somatic practices and physical experience as vital forms of inquiry.

Preceding the public events, the venue also hosted artistic research laboratories where methodologies of embodied knowledge-making and tools for artistic mobilisation were developed and tested. Throughout the project, new and existing methods were not only presented but *lived*. The dramaturgy unfolded gradually, culminating in *The Evening School on Care, Symposium, and Exhibition*—from the reawakening of bodies anaesthetised by systems of control, through the dreaming of alternative futures, to the enactment of collective visions for a more just present.

A central element was the spatial reconfiguration of Lavanderia a Vapore. The building was transformed into a soft, tented landscape—a dreamy encampment evoking the iconography of occupations and protest movements. Soft carpets, informal seating, and the removal of rigid structures created an inclusive atmosphere where participants could engage at their own pace. This deceleration of time fostered deeper connections and allowed a shift from rigid formats to fluid collectivity—balancing individual needs with communal rhythms.

Horizontal Postures and Resistance to Productivity

Actively challenging traditional power dynamics, participants were invited to shift from verticality (control, authority, performance) to horizontality (community, shared authorship, relational autonomy). In doing so, the notion of the collective was reimagined—not as uniform consensus, but as a space of plurality, negotiation, and new forms of togetherness.

Senses, Reciprocity, and the Poetics of Exhaustion

Care was explored through the senses, reciprocity, and interdependence—via somatic dance practices and interspecies, sensual investigations of transformation. Daniele Ninarello's *Healing Together* reframed the orgy not as a sexual event, but as a radical gesture of collective embodiment—the emergence of a common body through the relinquishment of individual boundaries. The performance offered a counter-model to hyper-individualism, embodying care as shared vulnerability and co-presence.

Intersections and Multitudes – The Souq of Knowledge

A central pillar of the Evening School was the *Souq of Knowledge*, a nightly installation open for three hours each evening. This

intimate, immersive space—styled as a “souq”, a site of exchange and circulation. It featured 12 tables hosted by individuals or collectives who each shared embodied or lived knowledge of care in one-on-one encounters.

The *Souq* created a low-threshold, highly affective space for knowledge exchange—accessible, soft, and deeply human. It recognised and uplifted forms of knowledge often unacknowledged by dominant systems. Beyond its poetic atmosphere, its power lay in its ability to unearth potentialities and enable intersectional convergences. For Lavanderia a Vapore, it marked a transformative expansion of alliances and a redefinition of the institution as a site of radical hospitality and distributed knowledge.

Rest Is Resistance – Rest as a Form of Revolt

In a world that glorifies endurance and productivity, a political refusal was staged: to resist exhaustion and embrace rest as a regenerative, rebellious act. What if slowing down were our revolt? What if rest could activate a fuller presence with ourselves and others—opening space beyond the constraints of the so-called “only possible world”?

Rest and sleep were explored not only as personal recuperation, but as infrastructures for collective care. The logic of constant performance was dismantled, inviting a culture of

sustainable relationality—one that resists burnout, embraces interdependence, and reclaims vitality as a political act.

Epiphanies and Visions – Imagining the Future

The program invited participants to dwell in the liminal—where loss of control becomes the condition for epiphany and dreaming becomes a shared tool of transformation. Could collective imagination give shape to other possible futures?

As part of this dramaturgical arc, *Il Tempo delle Mele*, a ritual ball, was co-created with 50 elderly residents of local retirement homes. This six-month process, focused on first love and sensory memory, culminated in a celebratory event that reinstated participants as active agents of desire and memory—countering ageism and cultural invisibility.

How to Become a Platypus, an artistic research and participatory performance by Elisabetta Consonni, investigated invisible forms of knowledge and non-linear learning. Through role-play and collective speculation, it proposed interdependent systems of meaning, resisting clarity in favour of ambiguity, authorship in favour of collective configuration—pointing toward democratic models grounded in care and collaboration.

Collective Fights – Reclaiming the Choral

The reactivation of chorality became a site of convergence and collective struggle. Here, care was mobilised not as sentiment, but as infrastructure—for resistance, solidarity, and re-entry into public space beyond institutional confines. The collective voice emerged as both aesthetic practice and political tool.

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Rather than offering fixed answers, *On Mobilisation of Care* cultivated conditions, tools, and atmospheres that allow us to ask differently: *What if art is not only a reflection of the world, but a rehearsal for its transformation?*

