UNIDEE - UNIVERSITY OF IDEAS, STATEMENT 2015

UNIDEE - University of Ideas is a multifaceted platform offering an educational programme of residential modules - taking place both at Cittadellarte and at academic partners' sites internationally - alongside a series of artists' residency projects. **Based on interdisciplinary research, knowledge sharing and experience exchange, the programme fosters processes of cross-pollination to investigate the relationship between art and public sphere.**

In keeping with Michelangelo Pistoletto's foundational principle of Cittadellarte as an "interdisciplinary educational laboratory" (*Manifesto Progetto Arte*, 1994) – of which UNIDEE was one of the first pillars –, this new experimental programme aims to provide practices, methodologies and tools apt at stimulating the emergence of a new figure: the "artivator" – a catalyst of artistic projects for a responsible social transformation.

UNIDEE - University of Ideas experimentally undertakes **a collaboration with universities** and other public educational institutions, not placing itself in an alternative position but rather proposing **an alternative to the traditional educational system**. Designed for multiple publics, **it fosters processes of cross-pollination between academic and artistic knowledge.** It aims towards the development of relational skills, the acquisition of socially responsible behaviours that value diversity, the development of an "effective" practice of horizontal thought embodying the other's point of view, and the possibility to "err", to go off topic in the name of a constant research for new directions and means of expression.

As an **educational artistic project**, UNIDEE - University of Ideas faces several challenges: its accretion in time and its impact on the locality. To succeed in becoming a natural site for daily learning and dialogue, the programme must be conceived as a long term endeavour. It shall be engaging continuously with civil society not only through **dialogue** and **active participation**, but also through the **(re)localisation** of those **processes of symbolic identification** on the side of the modules' participants, once they go back to their original social contexts and groups. Pistoletto claims that "if there is to be any possibility of openness to change in humanity, this depends primarily on education" (*The Third Paradise*, 2010).

UNIDEE - University of Ideas concurrently embodies a stepping stone and end point of a wider vision finalised at a re-foundation of the educational system as a whole, starting from childhood. This new system maintains the principle of educational offer as an agent for the development of collective conscience and as an activator of ideas, dynamics and aesthetic and ethical devices for social transformation.

For the year 2015 the **three broad thematic areas** and their interrelations are inspired by Michelangelo Pistoletto's principle of **trinamics**:
Trinamics is the dynamics of the number three. It is the combination of two units that gives rise to a third distinct and new unit. In trinamics the three is always a birth, which occurs by fortuitous or deliberate combination of two subjects. Trinamics is

always a creation. It comes into effect in the process of conjunction, connection, combination, conjugation and interaction of two elements that are in themselves simple or complex, such as two cells or two people. The trinamic phenomenon is found in chemistry and in physics, extends to the physiology of bodies and can even be applied to social life in its cultural, political, economic, religious and philosophical aspects.
(Manifesto of Education, 2015).

This trinamic principle is as an apt way to create and regenerate knowledge processes: the modules will analyse, on the basis of a combination and (con)fusion of theory and practice, the acceptations and uses of the three key concepts: **temporality, responsibility and participation. They provide an outline for an in-depth analysis, and will function as semantic groups unfolding not chronologically but following relational, associative and procedural modalities**, set out to examine and critique their semantic ranges – deriving from their presence and appropriation by different disciplines within a variety of social contexts.

Temporality is understood as the historical-artistic, philosophical, political and mediological discourse on time as a central element in participatory practices taking place in social contexts. Thanks to those transformative processes the languages of art have undergone since the first decades of the 20th century, art itself has acquired **expressive freedom and autonomy** and has overcome its self-referentiality. Furthermore, these processes have contributed to a transformation of both artistic thought and practices, questioning the traditional roles of the idea of artist and public, while critiquing the work of art and its function. Artists became less interested in object-making, preferring to activate **long term relationships and collective processes**, blurring the boundaries between time, situations and spaces of the everyday, as much as moving freely across disciplines (e.g. science, architecture, anthropology, economy, politics, communication, information technology).

The concept of **responsibility** refers to the realm of physical habitat, embracing the environment and how it is experienced at a private and public, local and global level. It is intended here not only in a strict urban and ecological acceptation, but also in a phenomenological, emotional and anthropological one. A twofold term, *respons-ability* is **the ability to respond** to the needs and desires expressed by certain constituencies dwelling in contexts undergoing **urban/social transformation**. Here, the role of the artist becomes **ethical**, moving beyond its aesthetic nature: she/he is invited to imagine different ways of observing, listening to and analysing people to release them from socially imposed interpretations and schemes, whilst encouraging their self-awareness and knowledge of the other and their environment.

The third topic is that of **participation**: through it, and the combination of art's autonomy and artist's social responsibility, individuals become co-authors in the making of an art work. The concept of participation in art is opposed to that of **spectatorship** (whose critique has Situationists' origin), since it refers to the

observer's emancipation from her/his passive attitude and to the experimentation of new democratic and "demopractic" modes of action. However, these **models of democracy in art** do not intrinsically relate to those of democracy in society, rather their equation is misleading. It is the latter which does not acknowledge art's ability through new interdisciplinary interpretative models, to create new criteria for a re-imagination, reconfiguration and regeneration of existing socio-political structures.

Text by Cecilia Guida, director and curator

Mentors and Guests for 2015 (in order of appearance):
Salvatore Iaconesi & Oriana Persico; Silvia Franceschini with Stefano Rabolli Pansera (Beyond Entropy); Aria Spinelli with Tullio Brunone (Laboratorio di Comunicazione Militante); Massimiliano Viel; Emilia Telese with Richard Shields; Giulia Grechi with Fiamma Montezemolo; Saioa Olmo Alonso with Sabel Gavaldón; Giusy Checola with Thomas Gilardi; Federica Martini with Anne-Julie Raccousier; Alessandra Donati with SMart Belgio/Italia; raumlaborberlin; Beatrice Catanzaro; Ana Dzokic & Marc Neelen (STEALTH.unlimited); Santiago Reyes Villaveces with Manuel Ángel Macia; Andrea Caretto & Raffaella Spagna with Attila Faravelli; Monica Narula (Raqs Media Collective) with Rasmus Nielsen (Superflex); Omer Krieger.