

A SQUARE ENTERS A SCHOOL, A SCHOOL BECOMES A SQUARE

Valentina Mandalari & Marco Terranova (MAGIONE WE)

THE SCHOOL AND THE SQUARE

Magione WE sneaks between the alleys of Kalsa, an historical district affected by gentrification processes with a complex socio-cultural stratification. Wealthy enclaves coexist with highly marginal areas. Public space plays a fundamental mediation role. The square and the school are democratic places left open to the different communities to meet and interact.

MAGIONE WE

Since 2013 the square has been interested by re-appropriation actions led by associations and informal groups. Nevertheless, the school main outdoor spaces - the garden and the courtyard - remained amorphous and inhospitable.

Magione WE consists of a community building project to create safe spaces for free playing and convivial activities promoted by families and residents.

A team of self-builders has been involved in developing the idea of rafts, i.e. floating wooden playgrounds for these outdoor spaces. The whole intervention has been co-designed with the school staff. The construction phase has been an open-site, with children "testing" the installations during the realisation stage (already climbing on them while being set up!)



FLOATING RAFTS

The circles in the garden. Once kids step on them they will find themselves on wooden islands, safe from an uneven and mysterious ground. They can lay, sit, listen, get lost in the overhead branches, hug the tree trunk. They can also sit around the big circle on petal shaped wooden seats.

The platform in the courtyard. It recalls a micro settlement emerging heterogeneous from a dull concrete surface. It hosts two kid-sized houses with a piece of wheeled fertile soil. Despite a resolute red personality, it merges gently with the surrounding historical building.

OPENING

At the end of the participated building process the floating rafts have been delivered to the community, during an opening-party with a gathering of local artists.

Some kids climbed and sat on top of the huts like sailors on a ship's deck. In the garden, dozens of them sat under the crown of the big tree rapt and charmed by the artists songs and stories.