



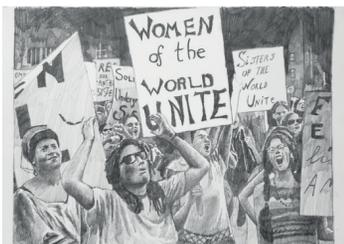
GIVE YOUR DAUGHTERS NAMES THAT
COMMAND THE FULL USE OF THE TONGUE

MARINELLA SENATORE

Luminarie are like ethereal architectural structures that can build the idea of a plaza even when this plaza doesn't exist.

Marinella Senatore, *Make It Shine*, 2022

For Marinella Senatore, art is a horizontal platform on which different but equal actors form an energetic, unified movement and thus a collective narrative. Emerging from an aesthetic of resistance and the transformative power of social engagement, Senatore's relational and integrative practice encompasses film, photography, painting, collage, drawing, sculpture, installations, and performance. Characterized by their participatory and political nature, her works explore the potential of art as collaboration to bring about profound social change. The ongoing dialogue between cultural history, pop culture, and social structures is at the heart of the artist's community-based projects. Senatore, who sees herself as an "activator of processes," redefines the role of the audience, not as an audience full of spectators, but as a group of active people with individual stories, interests, and abilities. In order to realize her spectacular collective parades and audiovisual works, the artist involves the public, and sometimes entire communities, as protagonists in the creative process.



MARINELLA SENATORE, *It's time to go back to the street*, 2019

The collective power shared by spectators does not stem from the fact that they are members of a collective body or from some specific form of interactivity. It is the power each of them has to translate what she perceives in her own way, to link it to the unique intellectual adventure that makes her similar to all the rest in as much as this adventure is not like any other. This shared power of the equality of intelligence links individuals, makes them exchange their intellectual adventures, in so far as it keeps them separate from one another, equally capable of using the power everyone has to plot her own path.

JACQUES RANCIÈRE, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 2008



MARINELLA SENATORE, *It's time to go back to the street*, 2019

In the light installation *Remember The First Time You Saw Your Name* (2020), past, present, and the possibility of a future collide in a single thought. With a powerful, poetic message, for which Marinella Senatore is known, she illuminates the facade and the neo-baroque architecture of the Kestner Gesellschaft with bright LED lights and letters. The ornamental arcs from hundreds of colorful lights draw attention to the powerful message about the transience of time and life, which begins with being given a name. At the same time, the light installation is a moment of empowerment that highlights the value of individual personal stories and experiences.

Since 2017, Marinella Senatore has found inspiration for her installations in the *luminarie* of southern Italy, the elaborate light architectures that traditionally adorn cities, recreating cathedrals, piazzas, and other architectural and baroque elements for public celebrations and outdoor religious festivals. By building her own site-specific light sculptures and adding glowing text messages to the *luminarie*, as in *Bodies in Alliance* (2021), she casts a critical light on the facades and squares in front of important buildings and sites. For the traditional festivals and religious celebrations in southern Italy, where Senatore herself comes from, selected streets, squares, and buildings are decorated with the magnificent light architectures. For her light sculptures, she takes up the admired architectural design



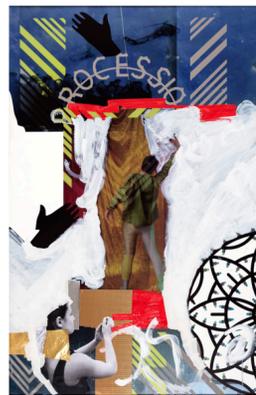
MARINELLA SENATORE, *Bodies in Alliance*, 2021

elements and illuminated constructs that have been built for public spaces since the 15th century. Senatore is interested in how communities develop between them and how the *luminarie* can have a social, dialogic, and healing effect through language and visual stimuli when people come together. The architectures of light, which were once created with oil lamps and later with light bulbs, now use energy-saving LED lights and offer a temporary, visual spectacle, which is made more relevant to our time with the addition of activist messages such as *Bodies in Alliance* (2022).

Having worked with luminarie since 2017, it was almost obvious for me to hire craftsmen and small businesses that still produce handmade luminarie for local events, and then tailor them with sentences. Text is important in my work and I strongly believe that poetry can be a revolutionary tool for resistance. The different aesthetics of the neon signs and of the bulbs that are part of these traditional geometric decorations, this encounter of past and present and even possible futures, is fascinating.

Marinella Senatore, *interview*, 2021

Senatore's poetic messages call for a feminist and political discourse on social issues and personal stories, as in the drawing *It's time to go back to the street* (2019). Her luminous messages provoke us to activate and use the understanding of our own body as a force to unite for resistance in future gatherings in the urban space. The Goseriedepplatz in front of the Kestner Gesellschaft is such a place where people meet at festivals, demonstrations, and other gatherings. For Senatore's work



MARINELLA SENATORE, *Forms of Protest by Oppressed Minorities Re-Emerge from the Past*, 2019

we sign something, and it is also one of the first words that we spoke and wrote as children. In her works, Senatore catalyzes the power of individual stories and brings them to light as an energetic field that forms a social sculpture through collective storytelling and sharing. Her drawings and collages inspired by literature, such as *It's time to go back to the street* (2019) and *Make it Shine* (2021), tell of people and their demands, who gather to protest or celebrate. They are a central leitmotif and the main theme in Senatore's works. Groups that come together collectively form a mass that is visible to them and demands new freedoms with the collective power of movement.

Senatore's artistic strategy and logic of citing literary and political figures, pop culture, and feminist creative figures from the past and present for her *luminarie* in public places and for her drawings, collages, paintings, and embroidered panels transform them into activist banners of protest and rebellion. Sources for Senatore's quotations and messages range from feminist contexts and popular traditions to art and literature, such as "Give your daughters difficult names" from the feminist poet Warsan Shire (*1988), "I'm going to make everything beautiful around me" from the interior designer Elsie de Wolfe (1865–1950),

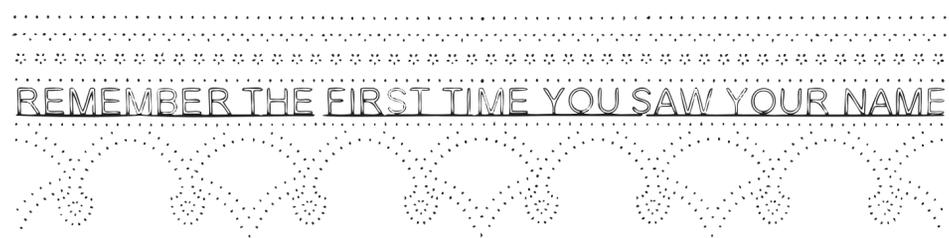
in which she invited socially and politically committed communities to collaborate on a program to question the social role of the art institution today. As a paradigmatic example of Senatore's thinking and artistic practice, the project brought together numerous Parisian non-profit organizations dedicated to diversity, inclusion, communal learning, healing, and social justice. Shortly before this, she realized the project *Afterglow* (2022) (organized by the gallery Mazzoleni, London – Torino) at several locations in London, comprising several different projects in different media ranging from music and dance performances to light sculptures, installations, parades, and collective texts. Senatore's renowned participatory project *The School of Narrative Dance*, which encompasses a network of around 7 million participants in 23 countries, is a free, nomadic school that focuses on exploring new ideas of community, empowerment, and emancipation through various disciplines such as music, dance, and the spoken word. The project, which was initiated in 2012, has been shown around the world over the past ten years and continues to grow with each stop.

What our performances—be they teaching or playing, speaking, writing, making art, or looking at it—verify is not our participation in a power embodied in the community. It is the capacity of anonymous people, the capacity that makes everyone equal to everyone else. This capacity is exercised through irreducible distances; it is exercised by an unpredictable interplay of associations and dissociations.

JACQUES RANCIÈRE, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 2008



MARINELLA SENATORE, *Bodies in Alliance*, 2022



MARINELLA SENATORE, *Remember The First Time You Saw Your Name*, 2020 (digital copy of luminarie and writing)

Remember The First Time You Saw Your Name (2020), this is a synergistic place to reflect on the political dimension of language and unleash its activist potential. In her festive light sculpture on the facade, Senatore explicitly deals with questions about our own identity and the feeling of individual and collective belonging, and once again emphasizes her urgent demand for empowerment, emancipation, and care. Her work contributes to the Kestner Gesellschaft's ongoing process of self-reflection with a view to redefining its role and improving its position as host and mediator of the city's social and cultural scene.

They also evoke a social meaning and my ancestral love for light, in its multiple narratives. For example, when I recreate rose windows and baroque portals, these become like mantras: catalytic elements of energy standing like monuments to the present, to the people, to the here and now. This is crucial for me.

Marinella Senatore, *interview*, 2021

Her fascinating, energetic, and simultaneously reconciling light architectures build an echo chamber for the messages in her works. *Remember The First Time You Saw Your Name* (2020) is an enigmatic thought experiment that enables us remember today the perception of our own names today and the stories associated with it in the past. At the same time, the first part of her message can be related to any personal memory that we currently recall. In everyday life we see our name when

"Dance first. Think later." from Samuel Beckett (1906–1989), and "The sun shines as long as longing weeps" from the artist and poet Franz Josef Noflaner (1904–1989). Her use of such quotations, intertextuality, and relational subjectivity reflects her relentless engagement with the radical and reconciling potential of language, which always entails personal experiences and whose sharing with other people triggers new movements. Using art, which she understands as social sculpture, she attempts to give her questions a material form and redistribute the roles of amateur and professional, artist and audience.

Senatore's latest project, the festival *Alliance des corps. Carte blanche à Marinella Senatore*, (2022), was recently shown at the Palais de Tokyo as part of the Carte blanche award ceremony. The festival celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Palais de Tokyo and the 10th anniversary of the *School of Narrative Dance*. Senatore took over the Palais de Tokyo for four days and, in addition to her light sculptures, showed a redesigned museum

MARINELLA SENATORE was born in 1977 in Cava de' Tirreni, Italy, and studied at the Naples Academy of Fine Arts (1994–1997), the Conservatory of Music (1997), and the Scuola Nazionale di Cinema in Rome (1999–2001). She currently lives between London and Rome.

Her works and performances have been commissioned and exhibited by Italian and international institutions including the High Line, New York; Queens Museum, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Kunsthaus Zürich; Pearl Art Museum, Shanghai; MAXXI, Rome; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Chicago, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin; Museo del Novecento, Milan; Kunsthalle Sankt Gallen; Faena Art Forum, Miami; Bozar, Brussels; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Museum der Moderne Salzburg; Serpentine Gallery, London; CCA, Tel Aviv; Museo Madre, Naples; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal; ICA, Richmond; Petach Tikva Museum of Art, Israel; BAK Utrecht; Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid; Palazzo Grassi, Venice; Museo Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; and Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Senatore has participated in the following contemporary art biennials: Bienal de São Paulo, Venice Biennale, Lyon Biennale, Thessaloniki Biennale, Liverpool Biennial, Athens Biennale, Havana Biennial, Gothenburg Biennial, Cuenca Biennial, Pune Biennial, Biennale Gherdeina, Bangkok Art Biennale, and Manifesta 12 in Palermo. Her next projects include solo exhibitions at the Museum Villa Stuck in Munich, the Museum der Moderne in Salzburg, the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, and CCA in Tel Aviv.

BE A BUILDER OF UNGUILT

Works cited:
JACQUES RANCIÈRE, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 2008.

TENLEY BICK, MARINELLA SENATORE, *Make it Shine (Extraordinary Things Are Possible Between Beings): The Art of Marinella Senatore*, in: *Marinella Senatore: Make it Shine*, 2022.

NICOLA GUASTAMACCHIA, MARINELLA SENATORE, *The Legacy of Street Resistance: A conversation with Marinella Senatore*, Flash Art, 2021.

LUCIA LONGHI, MARINELLA SENATORE, *Ritualistic Legacies: An Interview with Marinella Senatore*, Berlin Art Link, 2021.

Front cover:
MARINELLA SENATORE, *Make it Shine*, 2021
Collage and mixed media on cotton paper, 50 x 70 cm
Courtesy the Artist, Mazzoleni, London – Torino and private collection, Milan
© Photo: AGOSTINO OSIO

Back cover:
MARINELLA SENATORE, *It's time to go back to the street*, 2019
Graphite and charcoal on acid-free paper, 21 x 29,7 cm
Courtesy the Artist, Mazzoleni, London – Torino

MARINELLA SENATORE, *It's time to go back to the street*, 2019
Graphite and charcoal on acid-free paper, 21 x 29,7 cm
Courtesy the Artist, Mazzoleni, London – Torino

MARINELLA SENATORE, *Forms of Protest by Oppressed Minorities Re-Emerge from the Past*, 2019
Mixed media, paint and print on theatrical mirror, 120 x 80 cm
Courtesy the Artist, Mazzoleni, London – Torino
© Photo: RENATO GHIAZZA

MARINELLA SENATORE, *Bodies in Alliance*, 2022
LED bulbs and flex LED on a wooden structure, 120 x 156 cm
Courtesy the Artist, Mazzoleni, London – Torino
© Photo: RENATO GHIAZZA

MARINELLA SENATORE, *Bodies in Alliance*, 2021
LED bulbs and flex LED on a wooden and metal structure, 843 x 537 cm
Courtesy the Artist, Mazzoleni, London – Torino
© Photo: Lukasz - FOIFilms

Curator: ALEXANDER WILMSCHEN

We sincerely thank the artist and her gallery

Mazzoleni, London – Torino

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