

: to the lemons of the future

HELLO, YOU WHO FIND THIS
ENVELOPE, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE
FOR IT.

GROW THE FUTURES THAT IT
CONTAINS AND TO WHICH THE
ENVELOPE AND ITS CONTENT
ADDRESS TO.

CHOOSE A PROTECTED LOCATION
BECOME A FAITHFUL GUARDIAN
LEARN THE GESTURES, CARE AND
ACTIONS THAT THESE FUTURES
REQUIRE.

GIVE THEM LOVE, LET THEM
DREAM
LEARN FROM THEIR DREAMS.

An easy technique for growing lemons, consist in leaving the seeds recovered directly from the lemon for one or two days soaking in water. After two days dry them and remove the thin skin that covers the seed. So undressed, lay them on absorbent paper, fold the paper and spray thoroughly with water. Close the packet of seeds and absorbent paper soaked in an insulating wrapper (for example, transparent food foil) and leave to rest for 10 days. After 10 days, gently open the wrappers and observe which seeds have started to push the roots out. They are ready to be transferred to the earth.



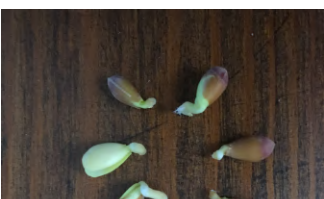
Biography of the Garden

In Belgium, Brussels, during the whole lockdown, we could still walk in the parks. We could run but could not stop, no matter the distance, even when in total solitude, stopping was not an option. "il faut bouger" (you have to move) the policeman told me "mais je suis tout seul a part vous" (but I'm alone apart from you) I answered, "il faut bouger n'est pas possible de rester dans un meme point. restez pas. ne resistez pas" (you have to move it is not allowed to stay in a same point. do not stay. do not resist). From one day to the next meeting in the street greeting each other by shaking hands or kissing has become dangerous, and we have learned conscientiously to be afraid of it. After all this time being suppressed in our private spaces, without contact, our bodies are in the state of confusion and fear.

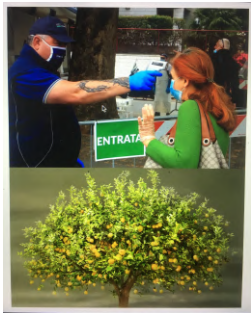
With the gradual de-confinement, while being confronted with new regulations and restrictions imposed on bodies and movements, we neglected the potential of big collective hug, that moment of joy, of holding tight and letting yourself be moved by the friction of the bodies. We have almost forgotten to have waited for it. Now we can get out and move more or less freely in the streets. Our bodies can rejoice, circulate, repopulate the public space. However our trajectories are limited, more than ever, controlled by the government and by economic choices, they prioritize mostly economic exchange. In some ways we are in a very delicate phase, in which much has been taken away from us, even if we are aware our bodies and economies are fragile and now we are easily manipulated to let go 'willingly' of our values and desires. Social Distance is acting how the name says, drastically reducing the opportunities for friction between social groups and reinforcing the separation between groups. And now more than ever the question is "which community are we supporting?" and "who/what does this community support?". In this absence of physical proximity and intimacy, contra-symbolic micro-political actions are necessary, ones that emerge naturally, learning from the virus (more then fighting it), questioning the Social ways that bring us close to each others or far away and how they are deeply iterating and responsible of the relationship we have with our planet.

It wasn't born as an "artistic project". It is, indeed, what manifested trough an encounter of research, reading (Vinciane Despret, Donna Haraway, Andrenne Maree Brown, Davi Kopenawa, Paul B. Preciado and others), writing and thinking through the manipulation of different materials.

All done without a specific frame, in the midst of the pandemic confusion. Then the small space of my room, the framing of conditions, and the specific political circumstances lead to this form. I somehow tried to follow this intuitive approach and let the story emerge.



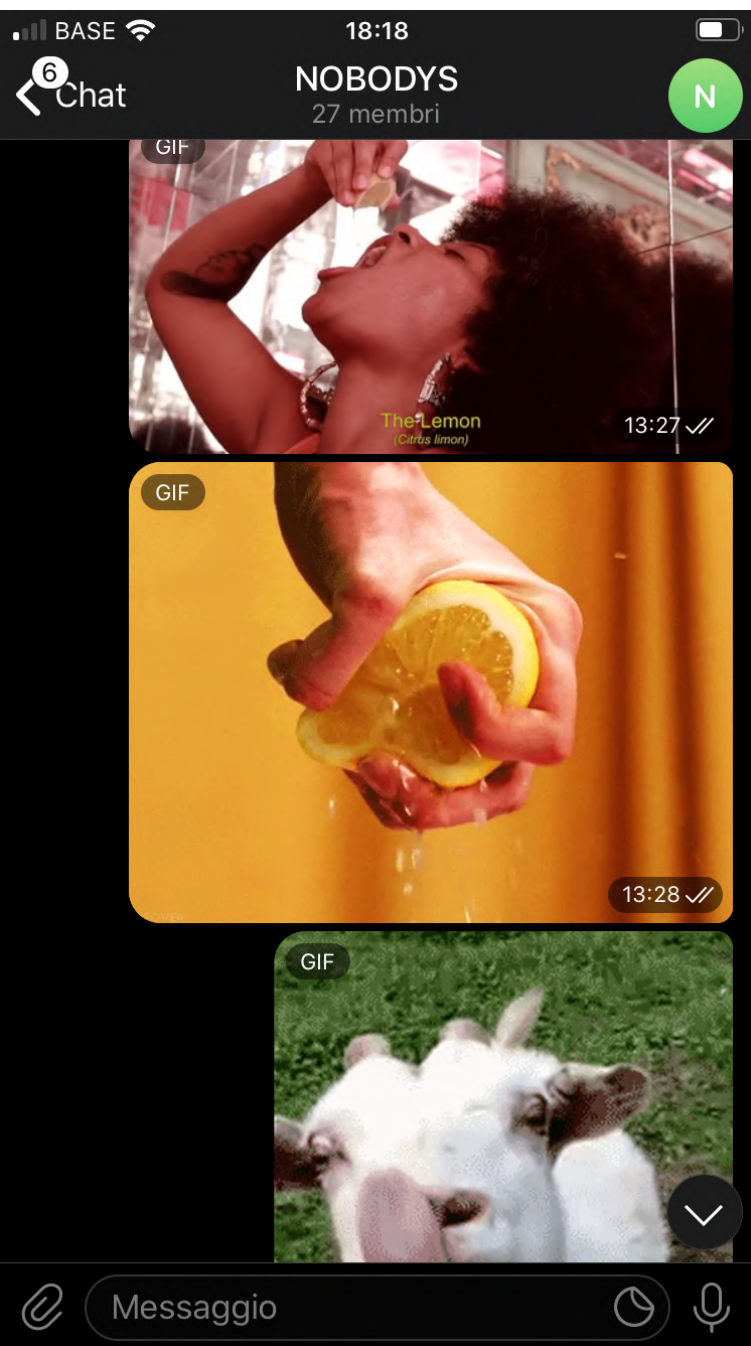
During the confinement, since the measures provided by the governments and institutions - fortunately or unfortunately - cut my existence out - as the once of many! - , I looked for alternative ways of sustaining myself. Growing friendships and mutual support relationships has been the natural response to this abandonment. My main concern was how to provide food to myself. Not knowing how long it would have last but knowing that already I didn't have economic possibility to sustain it, looking at the lack of interest of governs, much more busy to invest in control than in care, worried to find the way to make restart the same economy (+exclusion and control), I instinctively started to plant seeds of whatever I was eating. I've decided to collaborate with plants in order to sustain each other existence. My state of mind and my desire brought me to build a special symbiosis with lemons. I developed a technique to extract and prepare lemon seeds, to store them in envelopes for the process of first sprouting, make them ready to be planted. I wrote on the envelope the date on which to open the envelope on which the seeds would be ready to be planted and I've addressed the envelope: "ai limoni del futuro" (to the lemons of the future).



I was invited by Sara Leghissa to take part in UNTOUCHABLE version of Nobody's Business. We have known each other for many years and in summer 2019 I edited a small edition of the project in Teresina in Brazil. In June 2020 Sonia Sobral, a brazilian curator was waiting for me at the Centro Cultural São Paulo for an extended version of Nobody's Business, that included several weeks of residency and research to generate alliances in the performance art field in Sao Paulo with the specific focus on "bodies in the public space". This version in Sao Paulo never happened, but on the other hand Sara invited me to

participate to the edition she was organizing anyway with Triennale Milano in May. Following the outbreak of the pandemic, this new UNTOUCHABLE version of the project was developed with great attention limiting the virtual meeting spaces as much as possible and leaving an open space for practices shared in time but happening out of the virtual space in the physical spaces that each one was inhabiting. In a virtual meetings I shared the simple ritual of sowing lemon seeds, sealing them into an envelope and addressing the envelope "to the lemons of the future" - the magic words that accompany the ritual. In the invitation I specified the pseudo-scientific description of the verb LIMONARE - a slang used by Italian teenagers when referring to a long lasting kiss. Blocked in our apartments, somehow we felt we were cultivating future kisses.

* **LIMONARE** = *activity which symbolizes teenage approach to the unknown otherness, specifically present between 12 to 19 year olds, then it gets vintage for a while only to come back later and stay forever and evergreen. It consists of a significant exchange of saliva and other entities (bacteria, chewing-gum, pieces of food trapped between the teeth, smells, viruses...) that happens through the extreme proximity of the mouths, the adhesion thereof (sometimes very hard to un-glue), the sliding of lips, twisting, oozing slipping, caressing (and other remarkable maneuvers...) of the tongue. Some scientist of the field suggest it is an accelerator of language learning processes.*



One of the participants asked if the seeds could be shipped to her friend. "I think so" I replied, "I sent them to myself, but if there is a person you want to address them for, why not. It is a way of sharing organic and imaginative material from a distance!". I delivered in Brussels a birthday-package with a lemon and instructions. The first "techno bio Limone" package was born. The idea of sending seeds, of cultivating the desire to LEMON with someone from a distance, has fascinated others.

A friend on Facebook was looking for a cat to adopt, so I replied "Moi, J'offre des citrons à adopter". "Oui? Keep talking ..." she wrote me. So I found myself telling the story of these lemons, that is, of the collaboration that has cultivated itself in recent months, which is open to other collaborations and co-authorships. In the comments below three people immediately asked me to adopt a lemon. I began to share the practice with the ones who commented on my post, as well as close and distant friends, all seem to be eager to come closer, perhaps closer than before, all eager to LEMON. (kisses sprouted)

I started to gather related and inspirational material, but also proposals for adoption methods, thinking of the ways to write this future lemon garden collectively (the exchange of plants, cuttings, and planting, sharing a sprout to come closer or to generate intimacy from a distance).

I proposed that instead of exchanging the lemon plant for cash, we could have exchanged it for a Limone (kiss). And I imagined through that another garden - tangential but not coincident to the one of the lemon plants - was sprouting and spreading in our mouths oral flora, reimagining the bodies them selves as gardens that hosts entities.

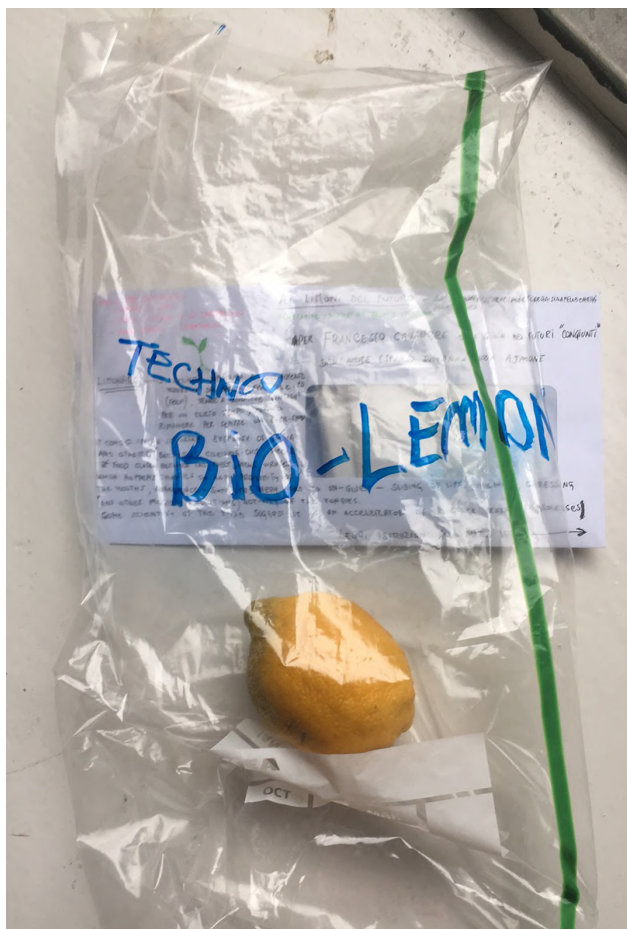
I kept on going to avoid shops, restaurants, bars and other economic activities that were now licensing encounters, while I kept going to make encounters through this garden.

As the plants (limoni) were spreading, so the future kisses (limoni) started to sprout.

From all this, a web page emerged. There I tell the story, and I invite others to collaborate. It's a draft, a bud, which needs attention and treatment. It grows and expands with every new encounter, generating unexpected paths. While constructing it I am thinking of a process of stimulating our vegetative imagination. It is the beginning of the road, which privileges intimate and consensual exchange relationships, the gift, re-appropriation of contact, inter-species cooperation and collaboration, and a co-authorial and interspecies writing practice that develops in different mediums (virtual, postal, physical...)

I could say much more, but maybe mostly I would like to give some inputs to then leave the space for a further conversation with you, if you would like. I'll conclude by linking you the webpage of the project I would like to share with you.

<https://teodebla.wixsite.com/matteodeblasio/limoni>



Matteo De Blasio is an Italian Brussels-based artist and autonomous researcher. While graduating in Philosophy at Università Statale di Milano, he developed a strong theater background based on the acting approaches of Jerzy Grotowski and The Living Theater (Judith Malina) while studying at Quelli di Grotowski school of theater, circus and dance in Milano. For consecutive five years, he worked as an actor in the renowned Teatro Franco Parenti.

While attending various workshops and master classes he developed a growing training and started to collaborate with artists from the dance and the performing art fields. He collaborated among others with Compagnia Quelli di Grotowski, Compagnia Enzo Cosimi, DOM-Loenardo De Logu, STRASSE, Rodriguez/Goldberg, Thiago Antunes, Dora Garcia, Marcela Levi & Lucia Russo/ Improvável Produções, Marcelo Evelin/Demolition Incorporada.

Starting by questioning the semantic of the space in which the body performs, his interest has shifted to performance art. With the support of MovinUp (MiBACT) he attended ISAC-Master program in choreography and visual art, directed by Daniel Blanga-Gubbay and he developed a research interconnecting/interrelating narrative and performativity, staging words, objects, presence and absence of the human body. The act of instant writing took an important part in his research, continuously interested in overcoming the tension between fiction and reality. Being interested in the sensual real place where existent borders (sexual, political, living/non living) can be faced and challenged, he wishes to allow a space where identities and stories collapse and emerge. His experimentations give rise to a work built around the moment of the encounter, as trespass, questioning the borders between author, performer, object and the audience.

“Moving from the semantic of the space perceived through the body to body-geography researches, I find in the zone of eros, pleasure and desire an alive knot of friction between normativity and the multiplicity of existence. I wish to share and inhabit this space in a decolonial and queer perspective, aiming to imagine forms of lives that will move across the end of capitalism”



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