

TETI journal



Hybrid Marines



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Reimagining the Neapolitan *Veduta* in the 20th- and 21st-Century City

Porosity, hybridity, and the hybrid marine

Since 1925, when Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis published a now-famous essay that described Naples as “porous”, scholars and critics have investigated the city as a place both ambiguous and unresolved, where outside and inside, public and private, sacred and profane, wealth and poverty, drama and comedy interpenetrate.¹ Ruth Glynn has recently reconstructed the reception of the essay, showing that renewed interest in the porosity of Naples emerged in the 1990s with the collapse of the polar divisions of the Cold War and the resulting opportunity to trace the city’s Mediterranean roots and networks.² In the same period, the theoretical frameworks of postmodernism and postcolonialism developed the concept of hybridity, a term that had first appeared in the eighteenth century in the natural sciences, and that was now taken up to describe processes of cultural confluence and transformation. In 1992, the Venetian geo-philosopher Massimo Cacciari revisited Benjamin and Lacis’ text, defining Naples as a “porous city” but also as a “threshold city”, thus extending the idea of porosity from the city’s urban fabric to its boundaries.³ In a similar way, in 1997, the French geographer Jean-François Troin aligned Naples with other Mediterranean metropolises such as Barcelona, Cairo and Damascus that he considered “frontier” or “hinge cities”.⁴ Although both Cacciari and Troin pointed out positive aspects of Naples’ liminality, their analyses were inflected with moralising language and adopted what Glynn has recognised as a “northern view” of the city and its “relative modernity”.

ty”.⁵ It was only with the Naples-based postcolonialist scholar Iain Chambers and his 2007 essay *Naples: A Porous Modernity*, that the apparent conflict between modernity and porosity was overcome, and the city’s complexity was taken not as a defect but as a productive critical term.⁶ In this historiographic current, it was the city’s porosity that opened it to cultural hybridisation. “Applied to the physical and metaphysical sense of the city, the idea of porosity can be extended to include its historical and cultural formation”, Chambers writes. “Porous matter absorbs whatever it encounters; it soaks up external elements while maintaining its initial form. It embodies and incorporates foreign elements and external pressures. The history of Naples is also, and perhaps more significantly, the history of such processes”.⁷ It is no coincidence that in the same year, the British photographer John Davies curated a photographic project in Liverpool called *Cities on the Edge*, which drew connections between six port cities whose complicated histories were considered in relation to their roles in a new, expanded Europe: Liverpool, Naples, Bremen, Marseilles, Gdansk, and Istanbul.⁸

Beginning in the first years of the twenty-first century, the concept of hybridity has been used to investigate not only Naples’ “essence” but also cultural and artistic production over the city’s long history. For example, the art historian Tanja Michalsky used the term in 2008 to understand fifteenth-century Neapolitan funerary monuments, in which artists and patrons selected and recombined diverse forms to communicate new meanings in a specific local context.⁹ In Alex Marlow-Mann’s “Gold and Dust: Hybridity, Postmodernism and the Legacy of Neapolitan Narrative”, a chapter in his 2011 volume *New Neapolitan Cinema*, the film historian showed how local filmmakers interrogated, subverted, and reconfigured cinematic conventions to reexamine Naples’ identity.¹⁰ More recently, this kind of analysis has been brought to bear on twentieth-century Neapolitan music, and in exhibitions of contemporary art.¹¹

5 Ruth Glynn, “Porosity and its Discontents: Approaching Naples in Critical Theory”, 87.

6 Iain Chambers, *Le molte voci del Mediterraneo* (Milan: Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2007), 77–138. The first edition of the book appeared in Italy in 2007 and was published in English the following year as *Mediterranean Crossing: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity*.

7 Iain Chambers, *Mediterranean Crossing: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 81.

8 For a critical analysis of that initiative, we refer to a talk that Gabriel Gee gave in 2021 for the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History, available here: <https://arthistory.utdallas.edu/video/naples/research-seminar/2021/gee>.

9 Tanja Michalsky, “The Local Eye: Formal and Social Distinctions in Late Quattrocento Neapolitan Tombs”, in Janis Elliott and Cordelia Warr, eds., *Import/Export: Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in the Kingdom of Naples, 1286–1713*, special issue of *Art History*, vol. 31, no. 4 (2008), 484–504.

10 Alex Marlow-Mann, *The New Neapolitan Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 114–158.

11 In 2013 the Fondazione Morra Greco launched a series of exhibitions of contemporary art entitled *Hybrid Naples: the order of ideas must proceed according to the order of things*, curated by Jörg Heiser. On the history of music, see, for example, Jean Paul Baldacchino, “Renato Carosone and Neapolitan Music: Challenging Paradigms of Hybridity in the Mediterranean”, in *Mediterranean Studies*, vol. 26, no. 1 (2018), 54–79.

1 Benjamin and Lacis wrote the essay in 1924; it appeared with minor revisions in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on 19 August 1925 (year 70, no. 613). The edition consulted for this chapter is: Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis, *Napoli porosa*, ed., Elenio Cicchini (Napoli: Dante & Descartes, [1925] 2020), which synthesises the two versions.

2 Ruth Glynn, “Porosity and its Discontents: Approaching Naples in Critical Theory”, in *Cultural Critique*, vol. 107 (2020), 63–98.

3 Massimo Cacciari, in Claudio Velardi, ed., *Conversazioni su Napoli* (Napoli: Cronopio, 1992), 157–190.

4 Jean-François Troin, *Le metropoli del Mediterraneo. Città cerniera, città frontiera* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1997).



Antonio Joli, *Embarkation of Charles of Bourbon in Naples, view from land*, c. 1759, oil on canvas, 127 x 199 cm, Naples, Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, on deposit from Museo di San Martino, inv. no. 24. Courtesy: Ministero della Cultura, Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte.

Against this background of explorations of Naples as porous and hybrid, this essay engages with what the present volume terms the *hybrid marine*. As the editors set out in their introduction, the hybrid marine encompasses both *hybridities of form*, or artistic modes that engage with and move beyond traditional artforms, and *representational hybridity*, or the integration of multiple points of view. The present essay studies four artworks, all created in the last thirty-five years for public sites and collections in Naples, that explicitly or implicitly represent the city's coast and port dimensions: an untitled installation that Jannis Kounellis made for the Museo di Capodimonte in 1989; two mosaics called *Naples Procession* that William Kentridge designed in 2012 for the Toledo station of the city's subway system; Michal Rovner's 2015 *Passages*, a video installation for the Municipio station; and, from the same year, the installation *Il mare non bagna Napoli* (The sea does not bathe Naples), which the artistic duo Bianco-Valente made for the rooftop terrace of the Madre Museum. In diverse mediums, formats, and representational modes, all four works engage with structuring elements of the Neapolitan *veduta* or view tradition, in which the sea plays a prominent role. Proposing new models for representing Naples as a port city at the interface of land and sea, each artwork dismantles or disrupts the formal, medial, and iconographic elements of the *veduta*, and reassembles them along with new elements. In conversation with the Neapolitan *veduta*, the works propose marines that are what we would call hybridities

of medium. Even as they draw on pictorial elements of the marine painting tradition, they introduce a range of other mediums — found objects and materials, cartography and mosaic, mural painting and video, language and the urban fabric itself — to create new hybrid marines. In turn, these hybrid marines propose to reimagine the city itself.

From the Neapolitan *veduta* to the modern city

In their introduction to the monumental *Iconografia delle città in Campania: Napoli e i centri della provincia*, Cesare De Seta and Alfredo Buccaro set out four types of early modern *vedute* or views of the city of Naples: perspectival views recorded from one or more actual points in space; profiles taken from ground level with three-dimensional volumes projected against a picture plane; bird's eye views captured from an imagined, elevated position in order to show the broader natural and built topography of which the city is part; and orthogonal or zenithal projections that encompass individual streets and buildings. All of these pictorial strategies, De Seta and Buccaro showed, aimed to present images of the city that were, or at least claimed to be, both objective and complete.¹²

¹² Cesare de Seta and Alfredo Buccaro, eds., *Iconografia delle città in Campania. Napoli e i centri della provincia* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 2006), 7: "metodi iconografici atti a permettere una lettura il più possibile 'oggettiva' delle diverse città nel loro insieme, caratterizzate cioè dall'intenzionalità di offrire un ritratto urbano globale." Unless otherwise noted, this and all following translations are the authors'.

When, in fall 1759, the Modenese painter and scenographer Antonio Joli took a commission to document the great court and civic celebration of the rise of Charles of Bourbon, King of Naples, to the throne of Spain, he drew on two of these *veduta* types: the perspectival view and the bird's eye view. In a pair of monumental canvases, Joli presented, in the first, a sweeping view of the Bay of Naples as seen from land to show Charles' embarkation aboard a Spanish ship on the afternoon of 6 October 1759, and in the second, a view of the coastline and city from the sea as the fleet departed the next morning, with the rise of favourable winds.¹³ Along with the canvases now held in Naples at the Museo di Capodimonte, Joli produced multiple versions of this pair of views, which the Bourbons dispatched to the major courts of Europe, including those of Spain and Vienna. In Joli's *vedute*, commanding, authoritative views of the city and bay represent a particular place in order to project Bourbon power on a European stage.

While Joli's view of the city from the sea looks back to seventeenth-century cartographic traditions, the pictorial elements that structure his *veduta* of the sea from the shore — oblong format, elevated point of view facing the bay, horizon line anchored at left by Vesuvius-Mount Somma, and the city's port embedded in a seascape in which nature and culture form an indivisible whole — would continue to inform the *veduta* tradition in Naples into the later nineteenth century.¹⁴ In this formulation, the port is shown primarily as a gateway to the historic city, whose monumental buildings were immediately visible upon disembarking in Naples. By the end of the eighteenth century, the romantic *topos* of Naples as a place of dramatic contrasts had taken hold in literature and began to shape visual representations of the city: the entrenched cliché of a paradise inhabited by devils, its cultural heritage ruined by the rabble, artistic

refinement at odds with the violence of the street, and Mediterranean light contrasting with the shadows of narrow alleyways.¹⁵

With the advent of photography and cinema, the production of the *veduta* passed to the new mechanical arts, but it inherited subjects and compositions from artists' workshops, as well as a taste for the picturesque, the antique, and the intertwining of nature and culture.¹⁶ In this same period, between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, Naples was also one of the departure points for a great wave of Italian emigration: a 1901 law had established that emigration could take place only from the ports of Genoa, Naples, and Palermo. Cinema and photography frequently communicated nostalgia for the homeland, with emigrants mourning precisely what attracted foreign visitors, in a feedback loop between self-representation and hetero-representation.¹⁷ The traditional *veduta* with its formal and symbolic elements persists in contemporary representations of the city designed for mass tourism.

These representational processes relate to changes that the city itself has undergone in recent decades.¹⁸ Since the land reclamations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Neapolitan coastline has been characterised by a sharp division between the eastern stretch, intended for harbour infrastructure and activity, and the western stretch, with its long and uninterrupted promenade from Santa Lucia to Mergellina and its eighteenth-century Villa Comunale, which open onto expansive views of the city's

13 Antonio Joli, *Embarkation of Charles of Bourbon in Naples, view from land*, c. 1759, oil on canvas, 127 x 199 cm, Naples, Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, on deposit from Museo di San Martino, inv. no. 24; *Departure of Charles of Bourbon for Spain, view from the sea*, c. 1759, oil on canvas, 128 x 205 cm, Naples, Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, on deposit from Museo di San Martino, inv. no. 23. For catalogues of the known versions, see Mario Manzi, *Antonio Joli: opera pittorica* (Venice: Studio LT2, 1999), cat. no. N.1–N.15; and Ralph Toledano, *Antonio Joli: Modena 1700–1777 Napoli* (Turin: Artema, 2006), cat. nos. N.XV.1–9 and N.XVI.1–3. On the pair at Capodimonte and for further bibliography see Nicola Spinosa and Leonardo Di Mauro, eds., *Vedute napoletane del Settecento* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 1989), cat. no. 72; Roberto Middione, *Antonio Joli* (Soncino [CR]: Edizioni dei Soncino, 1995), cat. nos. 28 and 29; Manzi (1999), cat. nos. N.2 and N.12; Toledano (2006), cat. nos. N.XV.2 and N.XVI.2; Nicola Spinosa, ed., *Alla corte di Vanvitelli. I Borbone e le arti alla Reggia di Caserta* (Milan: Electa, 2009), 174; and Middione's entries in Vega de Martini ed., *Antonio Joli tra Napoli, Roma e Madrid: le vedute, le rovine, i capricci, le scenografie teatrali* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2012), cat. nos. 12a and 12b.

14 For an exhaustive study of the history of views of Naples from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, see the exhibition catalogues *La città di Napoli tra vedutismo e cartografia. Pianta e vedute dal XV al XIX secolo*, eds., Giulio Pane and Vladimiro Valerio (Naples: Grimaldi, 1987); *All'ombra del Vesuvio. Napoli nella veduta europea dal Quattrocento all'Ottocento* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 1990); and Maria Iaccarino, "L'evoluzione dell'iconografia di Napoli dal XV al XIX secolo", in Cesare de Seta and Alfredo Buccaro, eds., *Iconografia delle città in Campania. Napoli e i centri della provincia*, 109–167.

15 Croce traced the history of this romantic formulation in 1922 (Benedetto Croce, "Un paradiso abitato da diavoli", in *Napoli Nobilissima*, n.s. 3 (1922–23), 153–157). The formulation persists; see, for instance, the portrait of Naples in Jean-François Troin, *Le metropoli del Mediterraneo. Città cerniera, città frontiera*, 38–41, in which the lush natural environment and glorious past are set against contemporary urban decay, stagnant economic development, and corruption and clientelism.

16 For an in-depth study of photographers active in Naples between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Giuseppe Galasso, Maria Antonietta Picone Petrusa, and Daniela del Pesco, *Napoli nelle collezioni Alinari e nei fotografi napoletani fra Ottocento e Novecento* (Naples: Macchiaroli, 1981), and Gaetano Fiorentino and Gennaro Mataric, eds., *Napoli in posa 1850–1910. Crepuscolo di una capitale* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 1989). On representations of Naples as a port city in film up to the 1950s, Massimo Clemente, "L'armonia perduta di Napoli città di mare nel racconto cinematografico tra le due Guerre Mondiali", in Annunziata Berrino and Alfredo Buccaro, eds., *Delli Aspetti de Paesi*, I vol. *Costruzione, descrizione, identità storica* (Naples: FedOA Press, 2016), 681–688; and Giuseppe Maria Montuoro and Diego Nuzzo, "Il lungomare: paradigma dell'oleografia tra cinema e architettura. Da largo Sermoneta alla salita del Gigante", in Cesare de Seta and Alfredo Buccaro, eds., *Città mediterranee in trasformazione. Identità e immagine del paesaggio tra Sette e Novecento* (Naples: FedOA Press, 2014), 1183–1192.

17 See, for instance, the film festival organised at the Cineteca in Bologna in 2011, *Napoli/Italia e il cinema dell'emigrazione*, curated by Elena Corra and Luigi Virgolin, and in particular the section *Napoli/Italia. Il pittoresco*.

18 On the relationship between the transformations of coastal cities and their representations, see Gabriel N. Gee and Caroline Wiedmer, "Introduction: maritime introspection", in Gabriel N. Gee and Caroline Wiedmer, eds., *Maritime Poetics. From Coast to Hinterland* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2021), 11–32.

land- and seascape.¹⁹ From the 1960s onward, the Neapolitan waterfront — first heavily damaged by bombing in the Second World War, and then administered by the Americans, whose most important NATO base in southern Europe was located in Naples — was transformed by the reorganisation of maritime transport by shipping containers. These transformations only intensified the separation between the area intended for port activities and the rest of the urban fabric, with great impact on the self-perception of the city's maritime identity.²⁰ From the 1990s onward, in tandem with a new municipal transport plan and with the progressive affirmation of the tourism economy, city leaders and urban planners have rethought the so-called "monumental port" area facing Piazza Municipio in order to reintegrate it with the historical city and its changing needs.²¹

Public art and site-specificity

The public, site-specific nature of the four works studied here is crucial to the ways in which each one reinterprets the *veduta* tradition. In many ways, the works correspond with the canvases that Joli painted for the Bourbon court in the eighteenth century: they were commissioned by a government entity, they are intended for a public audience (today broader and more democratic than in the Bourbon period, when art was reserved for the cultural élite), and they engage with dynamics between place, culture, and politics. Like the *vedute* of the past, they all aim to present a recognisable, distinctive image of the city, and to capture and render the *forma urbis* in visual terms. Precisely because of the importance of the works' patrons, artists, and contexts of display, they project the same artistic authority as the eighteenth-century paintings. But

whereas Joli's canvases were essentially mobile, made to be sent to courts throughout Europe, the four works studied here are site-specific: they were designed for particular physical and architectural spaces and respond to the preexisting cultural contexts of those spaces.²² Kounellis' 1989 installation was part of a series of solo exhibitions that the Soprintendenza of Naples, then headed by Nicola Spinosa, organised in collaboration with a group of gallerists and collectors. The space that the Museo di Capodimonte dedicated to the series was a vast gallery on the first floor that had previously displayed art of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In Spinosa's words, the intention was "to present the work of internationally established contemporary artists who, for this occasion, engaged with the history and present reality of our city — social, cultural, mythical, and imaginary — in order to create, with the solemn spaces of the Bourbon palace and with the famous masterpieces conserved there, a productive and stimulating relationship of continuity and dialogue."²³ The exhibition series opened in 1985 with the show *Vesuvius by Warhol*, organised at Capodimonte in collaboration with the prominent gallerist Lucio Amelio. The show elaborated on one of the most enduring symbols of Naples, and set it into direct conversation with famous early modern views of Naples illustrated in the catalogue. Warhol's *Vesuvius* is today's most famous *veduta* of Naples, printed on t-shirts and tote bags, but it is a view in which the city itself is absent. The rhetorical force of the name "Vesuvius" is such that the representation no longer refers to reality, and the profile of the volcano does not correspond with the actual Vesuvius-Mount Somma mountain system. Warhol was interested in Vesuvius as a subject because of the volcano's destructive power, but also because of its iconic nature. Indeed, the catalogue draws a comparison with the Empire State Building as the architectural symbol of New York.²⁴

The works of Kentridge and Rovner, from 2012 and 2015 respectively, are part of the so-called Art Stations of the city's *metropolitana*, the circuit of subway stations that, beginning in the 1990s, Naples planned in collaboration with the local railway and with the guidance of the art critic Achille Bonito Oliva.²⁵ The Art Stations

19 Stefania Palmentieri and Barbara Delle Donne have instead identified four areas: the western industrial area of Bagnoli, the scenographic area of Posillipo, the central area of Mergellina with the promenade, and the eastern area with the port proper and its industrial infrastructure. However, the authors recognise that only Posillipo and Mergellina have developed in direct relation to the historic nucleus of the city. See Stefania Palmentieri and Barbara Delle Donne, "La trasformazione del fronte marittimo di Napoli negli ultimi tre secoli", in Cesare de Seta and Alfredo Buccaro, eds., *Città mediterranee in trasformazione. Identità e immagine del paesaggio tra Sette e Novecento*, 889–902.

20 On the complex relationship between the port and the city and on the most recent projects for the waterfront, see the chapter "Il porto di Napoli come cerniera tra il mare e la città metropolitana", in Massimo Clemente, ed., *Il mare e la città metropolitana di Napoli*, special issue of *Tria. Territorio della Ricerca su Insediamenti e Ambiente*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2014). Regarding artistic responses to Naples' urban development, already in the 1980s, Cesare de Seta had involved new generations of photographers in a series of exhibitions that focused on the critical representation of urban transformations in Naples; see Giuliano Sergio, "European seaport narratives: mirroring history in contemporary media", in Gabriel N. Gee and Caroline Wiedmer, eds., *Maritime Poetics. From Coast to Hinterland*, 63–74.

21 For an overview of the history of the port of Naples over the last three centuries, see Stefania Palmentieri and Barbara Delle Donne, "La trasformazione del fronte marittimo di Napoli negli ultimi tre secoli". On the port's history until the post-war reconstruction, see Roberta Amirante, Francesca Bruni, and Maria Rosaria Santangelo, *Il porto* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 1993). On its more recent history, see the essays by Pietro Antonio Toma, in Pietro Antonio Toma, ed., *Napoli Porto. La nuova città* (Naples: Guida Editore, 2017). For a broader approach to transformations and redevelopments of the waterfronts of port cities, see Brian Hoyle, "Global and local change on the port city waterfront", in *Geographical Review*, vol. 90, no. 3 (July 2000), 395–417.

22 For a critical analysis of the site-specific as an artistic category, see Miwon Kwon, *One place after another. Site-specificity art and location identity* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002).

23 From the exhibition catalogue, *Onda d'urto. Un'opera di Mario Merz al Museo di Capodimonte*, ed., Bruno Corà (Naples: Electa Napoli, 1987), 12: "presentare il lavoro di artisti contemporanei, di sicuro prestigio internazionale, che in qualche modo si relazionassero, per l'occasione, alla storia e alla presente realtà civile e culturale, mitica e immaginifica, della nostra città provocando, con gli spazi solenni della reggia borbonica e con i celebri capolavori che vi sono stabilmente conservati, un proficuo e stimolante legame di continuità e di correlazione dialettica."

24 See in particular Angela Tecce's essay and Michele Bonuomo's interview with Warhol, both in the exhibition catalogue *Vesuvius by Warhol* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 1985).

25 On the Naples metro system in general with the first Art Stations, see *La metropolitana di Napoli. Nuovi spazi per la mobilità e la cultura* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 2000) and "Linee Guida per la progettazione e la realizzazione delle stazioni della metropolitana regionale", in *Bollettino Ufficiale della Regione Campania*, no. 26 (12 June 2006), 1–11.

were conceived as open-air museums, public spaces for art underneath the city's surface. Bonito Oliva described them as "artworks lived in distraction, a psychosensorial experience in which the viewer moves within a mobile field of relations created by a complex system of signs that form a kind of visual orchestration."²⁶ As Anna Detheridge wrote when the first four stations opened, their value is precisely in the relationship they create with their social and political context: "the theme of urban renewal in Naples assumes an organisational and structural power for the whole region, and the production of art and architecture at the highest level takes on the importance of a political manifesto in defense of democracy."²⁷ Both defining and revitalising the space around them, the metro installations are to be read in relation to the urban fabric in which they are embedded and the architectural design of the stations to which they belong.

26 Quoted in Anna Detheridge, "Arte e rigenerazione urbana in quattro città italiane", in Carlo Birrozzi and Marina Pugliese, eds., *L'arte pubblica nello spazio urbano: committenti, artisti, fruitori*, (Milan: Mondadori, 2007), 39–61; "opere vissute nella distrazione, un'esperienza psicosensoriale dello spettatore che si muove dentro un campo mobile di relazioni, realizzato dal sistema complesso di segni creati come una sorta di orchestrazione visiva", 58.

27 Ibid., 40: "il tema della rigenerazione urbana a Napoli assume la valenza progettuale e strutturale per l'intero territorio regionale e la produzione di arte e architettura di qualità acquista l'importanza di un manifesto politico in difesa della democrazia."

The case of Bianco-Valente opens onto another dimension of public art, in which site-specific artistic response flows into social practice.²⁸ Bianco-Valente's work usually emerges from a relationship with the community and the site of intervention, which comprises an urban and architectural as well as social and cultural context.²⁹ *Il mare non bagna Napoli* was created in 2015 and presented by the artists on long-term loan to Madre – Fondazione Donnaregina per le Arti Contemporanee as part of the project *Per formare una collezione/Per forming a collection*, through which the Madre Museum and foundation built a permanent collection of contemporary art that responded to its Neapolitan context.

Jannis Kounellis, *Untitled*, 1989

For Jannis Kounellis (1936–2017), Naples was above all a maritime city with a mythical dimension. For the first solo exhibition that the Greek artist held at Lucio Amelio's Modern Art Agency in 1969, he asked the photographer Mimmo Jodice to portray him on a boat off

28 For a critical analysis of social practice, see Suzanne Lacy, ed., *Mapping the Terrain. New Genre Public Art* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1994).

29 See Maria De Vivo's interview with the artists: "Arte, reti, luoghi, relazioni", in C. Maria Laudando, ed., *Reti performative. Letteratura, arte, teatro, nuovi media* (Trento: Tangram Edizioni Scientifiche, 2015).



Jannis Kounellis, *Untitled*, 1989, terracotta vessels, iron plates, and sacks of coal, Naples, Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte.
Courtesy: Ministero della Cultura, Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte.



William Kentridge, *Remediation of the slums of Naples in relation to the railway station, 1884 (Naples Procession)*, 2012, mosaic, Naples, Stazione Toledo.
Courtesy: ANM Azienda Napoletana Mobilità S.p.A.

the gulf.³⁰ That image, which shows Kounellis standing alone on the stern of a fishing boat, was used as the poster for the exhibition. As Sergio Risaliti has observed, photos for Kounellis were not simply evidence of a performance, but acted as an artist's statement, a poetic manifesto in which the artist presented himself through European cultural archetypes: in this case as a modern Odysseus returning to Ithaca.³¹ Kounellis drew on maritime themes throughout his career. In 1994, he used a cargo ship docked at the port of Piraeus as a venue for his first exhibition in Greece, in the city where he was born and from which he had departed in 1956.³² In 2005, he used a monumental anchor and rope for a permanent installation at the Madre Museum.

The installation at the Museo di Capodimonte, which opened in December 1989, consisted of about a hundred and fifty terracotta jars of various shapes, sizes, and periods recovered from Lazio and Campania and arranged rhythmically in the centre of the room, as if clustered in the hold of a ship; and eight iron plates hung on the walls, each of which supported pairs of

sacks filled with coal.³³ Into the jars Kounellis poured thousands of litres of seawater taken from Naples' bay; in one of the smaller terracottas, hidden at the centre of the group, he poured thirty litres of blood. (When the artwork was permanently reinstalled in 1996 in the Capodimonte's contemporary art galleries, Kounellis chose not to include water and blood, and reduced the number of plates and jars in response to the new space).

The installation at Capodimonte brings into play recurring themes in Kounellis' poetics: the contrast between natural and industrial materials, the time-space redefinition of the gallery, and the confrontation between antiquity and modernity. But the work can also be read as a representation of the city of Naples. The jars refer to the Greco-Roman origin of Parthenope and, at the same time, to the maritime trade in wine and oil produced in Campania since antiquity. The water drawn from the bay brought part of the sea itself up the steep hill of Capodimonte. For the Neapolitan audience in those particular years, the metal plates on the walls

30 Mimmo Jodice, *Il viaggio*, Pozzuoli, 1969, from the series *Avanguardie a Napoli*; see Mimmo Jodice and Bruno Corà, *Avanguardie a Napoli* (Milan: 24 Ore Cultura, 1997).

31 Sergio Risaliti, *Autoritratto come Odisseo. Azioni di Kounellis dopo il 1960* (Milan: Quodlibet, 2020), see esp. 19–35 and 85–100.

32 Bruno Corà, "Jannis Kounellis. Boat Ionion, Piraeus, 1994", in *Art Forum*, vol. 33, no. 5 (1995), 78–79.

33 Jannis Kounellis, *Untitled*, 1989, terracotta vessels, sea water, blood, iron plates, and sacks of coal, Naples, Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte. See the exhibition catalogue, Bruno Corà, ed., *"Senza titolo". Un'opera di Jannis Kounellis al Museo di Capodimonte* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 1990). The photo published here shows the permanent reinstallation of the work in 1996.

would have evoked Italsider, the great iron and steel factory in Bagnoli, on Naples' western waterfront: at that time, the plant was slated for demolition, and its furnaces were shut down a few months after the end of the exhibition.³⁴ Finally, the presence of blood alluded to dramatic events in local history, and to the miracles associated with the blood relics of the city's patron saints, Gennaro and Patrizia.

In formal terms, moreover, Kounellis' installation represents the Bay of Naples by constructing in actual space the planes that comprise a painted *veduta*. Within this framework, the viewer is positioned at ground level. The surface of the water that fills the jars forms the horizontal surface of the sea in a seascape, and the sheets of metal hung along the gallery walls evoke profiles of buildings. Indeed, Kounellis always considered himself a painter: "In the sixties they called me an artist, because they didn't know how to define a pile of coal. But I'm a painter, and I claim my initiation in painting. Because painting is the construction of images, it does not indicate a style or, even less, a technique. Every painter has his ways of seeing and his means of constructing images."³⁵ Here, Kounellis disrupts and dismantles the structuring elements of works like Antonio Joli's paintings for the Bourbon court, versions of which hang at Capodimonte: the oblong format with a fixed frame; the strong horizon line; the single, stable, elevated point of view; and the apparent authority of an accurate and complete representation. He constructs a representation of Naples that is not a planar pictorial field with a fixed frame separating the world of the painting from the world of the viewer, but that is made up of found objects and materials drawn from the city itself. Together, these elements constitute a new space in which artwork, place, and viewer converge and interact.

William Kentridge, *Naples Procession*, 2012

For Naples' Toledo metro station, designed by Catalan architect Oscar Tusquets Blanca and opened in 2012, William Kentridge (b. 1955) made two monumental, site-specific mosaics called *Naples Procession*.³⁶ Throughout, the station's design evokes the presence of the sea, which in antiquity almost reached this area

of the city. As one descends into the subway, floor by floor, the colours of the revetment of the walls change from the golden yellow of Neapolitan tufa stone to a more and more intense blue. In the underground passageways, which are below current sea level, the walls are animated by Robert Wilson's environmental installation *By the sea...you and me*, which comprises two long LED light-boxes that reproduce the image of a sea rippled by the continuous movement of the waves, an effect obtained through lenticular printing. Kentridge's mosaics are located just below street level. The work draws on materials and ideas that the artist brought together for his solo exhibition *Streets of the city (and other tapestries)* at the Museo di Capodimonte in 2009, when, at the invitation of the gallerist Lia Rumma, he exhibited the results of his research on historical cartography of the Kingdom of Naples.³⁷

Kentridge's mosaics at the Toledo metro station feature processions of black silhouettes of the kind that have recurred in the artist's videos, collages, and books since the 1990s.³⁸ Here, they are shown processing against a background of maps of the city of Naples. Unlike the tapestries he created for the exhibition at Capodimonte, the maps used in the mosaics are modern and relate to the history of the subway. For the mosaic titled *Central Railroad for the city of Naples, 1906 (Naples Procession)*, Kentridge chose segments of the subway line project that opened in 1925. The map in the second mosaic, *Remediation of the slums of Naples in relation to the railway station, 1884 (Naples Procession)*, corresponds to the architect Lamont Young's project for a rail transport line inspired by the one in London. The parading silhouettes are figures from the visual repertory that the artist has formed over the years, here incorporating figures from the history of Naples and its ancient and modern iconography. In *Central Railroad...*, San Gennaro leads the procession, followed by the sculpture of *Atlas* from the city's Archeological Museum, a young woman from the repertory of the Capodimonte porcelain manufactory, a *tammorra* seller, three male figures drawn from Pompeian frescoes, and even a figure inspired by Kounellis's *Iron Mill* (1998), a sculpture installed not far from the Toledo station. These figures are joined by figures of porters drawn from a series of tapestries Kentridge made in 2007.³⁹ In *Remediation of the slums...*, Kentridge adapts the form of the ancient Roman triumphal procession to represent the dislocated inhabitants of one of Naples' poorer neighbourhoods during the Risanamento, trudging along with a wooden cart piled with "trophies" of Neapolitan history.

34 On the story of the steel plant, see the novel by the writer and journalist Ermanno Rea, *La dismissione* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2002). On the artistic representation of Bagnoli over the centuries and after the demolition, see Barbara Bertoli, "Le utopie smarrite della 'Bagnoli jungle' nella rappresentazione delle arti visive", in Francesca Capano, Maria Ines Pascariello, and Massimo Visone, eds., *La Città Altra / The Other City. Storia e immagine della diversità urbana: luoghi e paesaggi dei privilegi e del benessere, dell'isolamento, del disagio, della multiculturalità* (Naples: FedOA Press, 2018), 959–969.

35 Jannis Kounellis, "Le parole per dirmi", *L'Espresso* (1 August 1996), 102–103: "Negli anni Sessanta mi hanno chiamato artista, perché non sapevano come definire un mucchio di carbone. Ma io sono un pittore, e rivendico la mia iniziazione alla pittura. Perché la pittura è costruzione di immagini, non indica una maniera né tantomeno una tecnica. Ogni pittore ha le sue visioni e i suoi mezzi di costruzione dell'immagine", 103.

36 William Kentridge, *Naples Procession*, 2012, mosaic, Naples, Stazione Toledo. For descriptions of the station and its artworks, see the individual entries on the website dedicated to the Art Stations of the city's transportation agency, the Azienda Napoletana Mobilità: <https://metroart.anm.it>.

37 See the exhibition catalogue, *William Kentridge. Streets of the city*, curated by Lia Rumma and Achille Bonito Oliva (Milan: Electa, 2009).

38 For these silhouettes and their meanings in Kentridge's work, see Gabriele Guercio's essay in Carlos Basualdo, ed., *William Kentridge. Tapestries*, exhibition catalogue, with essays by Gabriele Guercio, Okwui Enwezor, and Ivan Vladislavić (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2007).

39 Ibid.

In the *Naples Procession* mosaics, as in the tapestries in the *Streets of the city* series, Kentridge engages visually and conceptually with maps as sources, subjects, and modes of representation. Historically, cartography is closely interwoven with landscape painting: over the centuries, maps have served as armatures for pictorial representations of cities, and cartographers have drawn on the pictorial conventions of painters. As De Seta and Buccaro have recognised, orthogonal projection plans with streets and buildings are themselves a kind of *veduta*.⁴⁰ Plans and maps claim to be a neutral and objective tool to describe the *forma urbis* in its entirety; they are, however, cultural constructions, recently challenged by postcolonial studies applied to geography. As Iain Chambers and Marta Cariello have written, "It is[...]necessary to think of maps as palimpsests composed of processes of power that have traversed them and that therefore have developed and defined them."⁴¹ Kentridge, whose work has investigated South Africa's origins from a postcolonial perspective, understands maps as intellectual constructs, as well as their relationship to politics — in the case of Naples, the city's political history from the 1799 revolution to the nineteenth-century Risanamento to twentieth-century Fascism.⁴²

While drawing on historical maps of the city's transport networks, Kentridge's *Naples Procession* proposes a cartographic mode that is not complete, definitive, and objective, but fragmentary, layered, and contingent, and inseparable from historical forces of politics and power. With source material from multiple places and times, he assembles a stratified and diachronic image, local and yet open and composite: a palimpsest in which "the artist deterritorializes any particular geographies indicated in maps of the represented cities."⁴³ Against the background of this cartographic palimpsest, Kentridge foregrounds and monumentalises people whose lives were disrupted and transformed by the development of the modern city, and effectively erased from its maps. The mosaic medium itself refers to Naples' Greek and Roman cultural heritage, and creates a medial play between portable and ephemeral paper maps and monumental and enduring murals.

40 Cesare de Seta and Alfredo Buccaro, eds., *Iconografia delle città in Campania. Napoli e i centri della provincia*.

41 Iain Chambers and Marta Cariello, *La questione mediterranea* (Milan: Mondadori, 2019), 22: "Occorre dunque pensare le mappe come palinsesti composti dai processi di potere che li hanno attraversati, e perciò storicamente elaborati e definiti." On systems of geographical representation and their conceptual implications, see also Franco Farinelli, *Geografia. Un'introduzione ai modelli del mondo* (Turin: Einaudi, 2003).

42 On Kentridge's use of maps in his work, listen to the audio recording of the artist's interview *Maps* (2017) in "Exhibition Minutes", published on the website of the Philadelphia Museum of Art: https://archive.org/details/podcast_philadelphia-museum-art-ex_william-kentridge-maps_1000021467932.

43 Achille Bonito Oliva in William Kentridge, *Streets of the city*, 21: "l'artista deterritorializza ogni geografia citata dalle mappe delle città rappresentate." On the palimpsest in Kentridge's work, see Rosalind Krauss, "'The Rock': William Kentridge's Drawings for Projection", *October*, vol. 92 (2000), 3–35 and Maria De Vivo in William Kentridge, *Streets of the city*, 134–139.

Michal Rovner, *Passages*, 2015

Passages, a title that evokes Benjamin's incomplete work of the same name, was created by Israeli artist Michal Rovner (b. 1957) for Naples' Municipio station, designed by architects Álvaro Siza Viera and Edoardo Souto de Moura and opened in 2015.⁴⁴ The Municipio station is located opposite Molo Beverello, the city's central tourist docking station, where the rationalist Maritime Station (1934–36) also stands and where cruise ships and boat lines to the islands arrive and depart. It is a place of daily transit, not only for Neapolitans but also for visitors, for whom it serves as the entry point to the local public transport system. The station includes an underground connection with the port area, and when completed will feature an archaeological site to display the remains of the Greco-Roman and medieval city of Neapolis discovered during the excavation for the metro. The station is part of the larger redesign of the waterfront of Naples and its so-called "monumental port", and thus forms part of the European-wide trend of cultural redevelopment of former functional sites such as docks and quays.⁴⁵

The underground space in which Rovner's *Passages* is installed is dominated by the massive foundations of one of the towers of Castel Nuovo, the medieval castle located immediately above; *Passages* is situated just before the tower base. On a large white wall, the artist defined in pastel and watercolour the outline of Vesuvius-Mount Somma, the mountainous profile of the coast that continues towards the Sorrento peninsula, and details such as trees in the foreground. On this evanescent backdrop, tiny human figures are projected in a video loop. Rovner took these anonymous silhouettes in endless motion from her archive of footage filmed in Naples and other places, including Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Paris.

The parallels between Rovner's "video-fresco",⁴⁶ as Bonito Oliva described the work, and the Neapolitan *veduta* tradition are evident: the horizontal format, the elevated point of view, the landscape setting that brings together the natural and the built worlds, the presence of antiquity (the projections include details of a Pompeian fresco), and the idea of a "portrait" of the city from its sea coast to its mountains are all elements of the vocabulary of the *veduta* genre. The profile of Vesuvius and the maritime pines are instantly recognisable. And yet, by working in a subtractive pro-

44 Michal Rovner, *Passages*, 2015, video projection, pastel, and watercolour on plaster, Naples, Stazione Municipio. For descriptions of the station and its artworks, see the entries on the website dedicated to the Art Stations of the city's transportation agency, the Azienda Napoletana Mobilità: <https://metroart.anm.it>. At the time of publication, the video projection is out of order and awaits repair.

45 See Massimo Clemente, ed., *Il mare e la città metropolitana di Napoli*, 209–326; Stefania Palmentieri and Barbara Delle Donne, "La trasformazione del fronte marittimo di Napoli negli ultimi tre secoli"; and Paolo Giordano, "Napoli e il mare. Strategie di riconfigurazione tra città e porto", in Pietro Antonio Toma, ed., *Napoli Porto. La nuova città* (Naples: Guida Editore, 2017), 159–178.

46 In the entry for the artwork on the ANM website.

cess, Rovner complicated the relationship between place and representation: "I started by photographing Naples and then erased its identity: this could be a bay in any other part of the world, [...] I like to mix realms, times and spaces."⁴⁷ If the mosaic medium that Kenridge chose for his installation at the Toledo station evokes the monumental and the enduring, the pastel contours and projected film that comprise Rovner's *veduta* reject fixity in favour of an ephemeral image in perpetual transformation, interweaving places, times, and people otherwise distant from one another. By aligning the moving silhouettes projected on the wall with the passengers travelling through the subway's underground tunnels, Rovner's *Passages* engages a viewer who is not stable but in motion, not rooted but in perpetual transfer between individual place and geographic type. As Chambers wrote of Naples, "the city presents itself as a site of an inconclusive passage that we can explore, experience, and exhume but never fully explain."⁴⁸

47 From an interview with Rovner by Stella Gervasio, "Michal Rovner: Il mio Vesuvio nella stazione Municipio", in *La Repubblica Napoli* (18 May 2015): "Ho cominciato fotografando Napoli e poi cancellando la sua identità: questo potrebbe essere un golfo di qualsiasi altra parte del mondo. [...] Mi piace mischiare la realtà, le epoche, i luoghi."

48 Iain Chambers, *Mediterranean Crossing: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity*, 93.

Bianco-Valente, *Il mare non bagna Napoli*, 2015

Il mare non bagna Napoli, by Giovanna Bianco (b. 1962) and Pino Valente (b. 1967), consists of a line of words in capital letters, forged from iron and painted white, and installed at the edge of the rooftop terrace of the Madre Museum.⁴⁹ The terrace stages a panoramic view of the surrounding neighbourhood of San Lorenzo, with Vesuvius on the horizon and the sea just visible in the distance. From this privileged location, visitors recognise the most important buildings in the historic centre: to the right, the medieval church of Santa Maria Donnaregina and its baroque dome; behind it, the longitudinal body of the cathedral, from the facade to the apse, and the dome of the chapel of San Gennaro; to the left, the dome of the church of Santissimi Apostoli and its bell tower; and beyond, the dome and lantern of the church of Sant'Agostino alla Zecca. The skyline itself is a palimpsest in which these historical buildings appear among modern structures, architectural accretions, and television antennae.

The words that make up the installation are drawn from the title of Anna Maria Ortese's book *Il mare non bagna Napoli* (The sea does not bathe Naples), which was published in 1953 and immediately provoked

49 Giovanna Bianco and Pino Valente, *Il mare non bagna Napoli*, 2015, iron and paint, Naples, Museo Madre, presented by the artists as a long-term loan, acquired in 2022.



Michal Rovner, *Passages*, 2015, video projection, pastel, and watercolour on plaster, Naples, Stazione Municipio. Courtesy: ANM Azienda Napoletana Mobilità S.p.A.



Bianco-Valente (Giovanna Bianco and Pino Valente), *Il mare non bagna Napoli*, 2015, iron and paint, Naples, Museo Madre, on long-term loan from Bianco-Valente's studio. Courtesy: the artists.

heated debate.⁵⁰ Ortese's collection of short stories and reportage portrays the difficulties and suffering of post-war Naples in a style that, as Ortese described it many years later, "has something of the exalted and the feverish; it tends toward the high-pitched, encroaches on the hallucinatory, and at almost every point on the page displays, even in its precision, something of the too much."⁵¹ Ortese's characters — not only the impoverished but also the bourgeoisie, aristocrats, and intellectuals — live in suffocating conditions, amid human misery, and find no way out. The paradoxical title, taken from a line in one of the book's stories, denies the sea as possibility or relief, as opening or horizon. Ortese's stories are as peripatetic as her life: she leads us through alleys, courtyards, and avenues, offering a sort of urban portrait, from the centre to the suburbs to the "involuntary city", as she calls the communities of displaced people who, after the war, lived in eighteenth-century *granili* or granaries. "Rereading those pages today", Bianco and Valente have observed, "one

marvels at how relevant they remain, in particular when they describe the social dynamics that animate the city and that reveal the total disconnect between institutions, intellectuals, and a large part of the population, which is still relegated to a subsistence economy. We all inhabit the same places, but on completely different levels that only occasionally seem to intersect."⁵² The idea of Naples without the sea, which in Ortese's time was a provocation, has been increasingly investigated in contemporary scholarship and criticism, and several studies have discussed the complex relationship between the port and the city since the end of the nineteenth century, as the development of the port area resulted in its separation from the rest of the urban fabric.⁵³

50 The book was published in 1953 by the publishing house Einaudi as part of the series edited by Elio Vittorini. On its controversial reception, see Lucia Re, "Invisible Sea: Anna Maria Ortese's *Il mare non bagna Napoli*", in *California Italian Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2012), 1–18.

51 From the preface that Ortese wrote for the 1994 edition of the book, Anna Maria Ortese, *Il Mare non bagna Napoli* (Milan: Adelphi [1953] 1994, 9–10: "...ha un che di esaltato, di febbrile, tende ai toni alti, dà nell'allucinato: e quasi in ogni punto della pagina presenta, pur nel suo rigore, un che di 'troppo'..."

52 From the artists' statement published on their website, www.bianco-valente.com: "Rileggendo oggi quelle pagine si resta meravigliati di quanto esse siano attuali, in particolare quando descrivono le dinamiche sociali che animano la città e che vedono il totale scollamento fra le istituzioni, gli intellettuali e un'ampia parte della popolazione che è ancora relegata ad una economia di sussistenza. Abitiamo tutti gli stessi luoghi, ma su piani completamente diversi, che solo occasionalmente sembrano intersecarsi."

53 In addition to the aforementioned Stefania Palmentieri and Barbara Delle Donne, "La trasformazione del fronte marittimo di Napoli negli ultimi tre secoli", see also Annamaria Frallicciardi and Antonella Cuccurullo in Massimo Clemente, ed., *Il mare e la città metropolitana di Napoli*, 219–234. Chambers observed that "the sea remains an accessory, an appendage from which fish once arrived and urban effluence is now dispatched", *Mediterranean Crossing: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity*, 84.

By joining the urban fabric with a line of text, Bianco-Valente propose a *veduta* that is made of the city itself — a view, however, that is both contradictory and unfinished, always in the process of being remade. Using the city as medium and a line of text as organising compositional principle, the work restages elements of the *veduta* tradition: the horizontal format, the commanding view from above, and the union of city, sky, and sea. But the linguistic play of the phrase “Il mare non bagna Napoli” removes the key element of the marine: the sea. Indeed, Bianco-Valente’s installation turns on a disarming contradiction: it negates in language the sea that is in fact visible from the point of view of the terrace of the Madre Museum. This contradiction immediately disorients the viewer, recalling in visual terms the experience of disorientation that Ortese’s own writing provokes. (Ortese herself entitled the preface to the 1994 edition of the book “The ‘sea’ as Disorientation”). By using the physical fabric of Naples as a medium, captured from the visitor’s actual point of view and physically present with its high domes and narrow alleys, where neither the sun nor the healthy sea breeze reach, the work presses viewers to consider the city more critically. For Bianco-Valente — the only artists among those discussed here who actually live in Naples — the city is complex, problematic, and unresolved. *Il mare non bagna Napoli* consists of the artwork itself but also the practice of caring for it. Every year the artists repaint the iron words, inevitably worn from exposure to the elements, a practice in stark contrast to the general abandonment of the city’s cultural heritage by local and national institutions, as the view from the terrace reveals.

Veduta and city reimagined

Together, Jannis Kounellis’ *Untitled*, William Kentridge’s *Naples Procession*, Michal Rovner’s *Passages*, and Bianco-Valente’s *Il mare non bagna Napoli* represent diverse modes in which public, site-specific art in Naples over the past thirty-five years has engaged with the pictorial tradition of the *veduta*, and with the image of the city itself. At once drawing on and dismantling the formal, medial, and iconographic elements of the marine painting tradition, from the horizon line to the elevated point of view, these works open the genre to incorporate a range of mediums like found objects and materials, mosaic, video, language, and the built and natural environment itself. Moreover, although all of these works represent Naples as a port city defined by the meeting of land and sea, they offer diverse views of the city’s identity, views shaped not only by the artists’ visual and material poetics but also by the historical contexts in which the works were commissioned. While Kounellis’ installation dates to a period in which Naples was still confronting the destruction of its built heritage in the earthquake of 1980, the other works were made amid the city’s contradictory renaissance, both reenergised and threatened by mass tourism. Kounellis presented Naples as a place where human and natural elements (jars, seawater, and blood)

and modernity (steel and charcoal) coexist on different planes, developing a theme that ran through the Arte Povera movement, and perhaps reinforcing (if unintentionally) the image of Naples’ alleged anti-modernity. Twenty-five years later, Rovner imagined Naples as a welcoming Grand Tour destination to be explored and enjoyed, even if its details are elusive and ambiguous. It’s not a coincidence that the work was conceived as part of the new “monumental port” area, an entry point for citizens and tourists into a prosperous and reconciled city, proud of its past and linked to the wider world by the sea. Bianco-Valente’s and Kentridge’s representations of the city, meanwhile, offer complex visions in which conflicting forces shape and animate a multilayered palimpsest, where Naples’ history is still a legacy to be confronted and questioned. Here, the artist’s role is to make contradictions visible, even to the point of denying the presence of the sea. In this way, they reveal the city as a place where, as Chambers observes, one “liv[es] urban life as a problem, as an interrogation, as a provocation”⁵⁴ — a place that offers us new pathways by which to organise urban space, produce culture, and animate social dynamics, contesting the idea of a single, homogeneous modernity, and unsettling the serene horizon line of its representation. ⑦

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54 Iain Chambers, *Mediterranean Crossing: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity*, 80.

Hybrid Marines

Artists have long been drawn to the sea and ports as sites for inspiration and creative interrogation.

The present volume of essays and artworks is concerned with the maritime world, from the coast and the harbour to the open sea, and its rich history of transformation, encounters, and navigations, as well as transnational and transcultural formations.

Hybridity opens two potentially overlapping paths of inquiry into the marine: first, a hybridity of form, considering how practitioners exploring the realm of the maritime have developed new ways of working that transcend traditional artforms. Second, a representational hybridity, investigating the extent to which seascapes might integrate multifocal points of view. The combination of these formal and representational hybridities unveils intersecting motifs, which are explored from both art historical and artistic perspectives by the contributors to this second issue of TETI Journal.

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About TETI Journal

TETI Journal is a research publication that aims to serve as a platform to develop transdisciplinary investigations, favouring cross-boundary exchange of knowledge engaging with industrial and cultural transformations of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. It promotes reflections on pressing contemporary socio-political debates, while acknowledging the historical roots of contemporary negotiations, *longue durée*, and the spectral survivals of the past into the present.

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Cora Piantoni, *PORT! WORK! MOVEMENT!* 2023
Hand signs used by port workers to communicate
when moving containers.

