



## **Studio away from Studio : Artists in COVID19 Quarantine**

### **Diana Sirianni**

- Where are you? Do you have Quarantine? Since when?

I am in Berlin, we are in a “soft” lockdown since March 9th, meaning we can go out and meet max. 1 person with 1,5 m distance

- How many times do you leave your house? Are you with family and/or pets?

I leave the house one or two times a day, I go to my studio by bike, to to the park to walk or to work with the computer, or to buy food. I share my flat with a friend.

- How are you feeling?

At the beginning I felt scared and with a strong pull to act and respond to the situation, now I feel that the length of this situation and the insecurity about the future turn into a certain lack of energy.

- Are you making work? If so, is there a difference since the quarantine, such as inspiration, motivation, productivity, etc?

I’ve been working in the studio on small collages, the quarantine has been helpful to work on smaller formats which I haven’t done for a long time. Other kind of relational work in public space stopped and my imagination is stuck as long as I don’t know when and how it will be possible to work interactively outside again.

- Are you making something new or working on something you started before the quarantine?

The small collages are new. As part of my artistic practice I lead artists’ liberation workshops in collaboration with another artist. We created an online version of the workshop that we will offer to students of the art school in Berlin and Hamburg in the next weeks. In my life I also do body-based coaching and in the last weeks I developed my skills online, which was great and surprising. I see this as part of my artistic approach which is at the intersection between art, therapy and activism therefore I mention this activities here.

- Are you making any work related to Covid19?



Not specifically.

- Has it changed any future art projects you had in mind or planned?

Many actions in public space that were supposed to take place in this time from my collective/open platform Women\* Making Art in Public Space couldn't happen.

- Has it changed any exhibition plans?

I had an exhibition in Rome, Italy that was canceled and also the participation to a feminist festival with a creative action in public space.

- Has the medium changed due to limited resources or due to staying at home instead of studio?

As we can go to our studio not, but since I couldn't work in public space yes.

- Is art helping you stay sane?

Definitely! It brings me back to my line of thought, to calmness and playfulness.

- Do you have another job that has been affected?

Yes, my coaching. Unfortunately some workshops were canceled.

- Are you reaching out to other artists?

Yes, starting with my friends. It helps me so much to be in touch with them, share feelings and thoughts. I also organised a little zoom meeting with two artists I didn't know so well and it was really nice. The workshops I will give in the next weeks are addressed to art students and I regularly lead an artists' support group. Exchanging and supporting other artists really helps me to support myself as well and keep a good perspective about being an artist.

- Do you feel the art world has come to a stop?

I don't know so much about it because I withdrew from it time ago. Its self-referentiality in face of so much social and political urgency and my awareness about the need of a new fundament of being human led me to this decision. The art market was an illusion and a distortion for me of what art actually is for and in a way I feel that in the last years I prepared myself to the fall of this illusion. My art and my life have their roots in human relationships and community and not so much in the art business.

- If you are staying at home, do you see your home differently?

I used to spend already a lot of time at home, since I work a lot from home. So it is not so

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different. But in general the situation brought me to look inside even more and face my own fears. The house is a metaphor for my own self. I started to bring flowers at home and cook better food. Yesterday I've read a quote from the Sufi poet Rumi which says: "why do you walk around with an empty basket , if there is a spring/source within you?"

- What do you miss the most as an artist during this quarantine?

I miss hugs, touching (is part of my work of body-based coaching), dancing in a dance studio and to be in a group, that kind of confidence that is created by sharing a good perspective with many people.