



CONNECTING CULTURES presents

**“Mapping the invisible. EU-Roma Gypsies”**

Introduction by **Anna Detheridge**, Connecting Cultures' President  
with the participation of **Gabi Scardi**, **Thomas Acton** and **Maria Papadimitriou**  
Contemporary Arts Archive of Connecting Cultures

**6th October 2010**

**h. 7.00 pm**



Maria Papadimitriou, The Best House

The presence of Roma people in cities seems to have become an open and problematic issue especially in Italian and European chronicles. Except in rare cases, Roma people are seen more and more as a thorny and controversial presence; the feeling of rejection that falls on “other” people is ever stronger. Most of Roma population lives in extreme poverty and degradation, apart from the rest of society and physically separated: in some areas they are isolated, due to the lack of minimum infrastructures. They occupy “nowhere places” - abandoned buildings or unplanted areas by the roadside - from which they are too often cleared out without any policy of real support or effort towards integration on the part of public administrations in search of consensus. The result is a vicious circle, which removes the “problem” on the surface without searching for any lasting solutions.

The issue is complex and touches deep chords. A more genuine and open understanding of Roma culture can help to face it. But what is the role of culture in the processes of social integration and coexistence in cities? What could be the longterm effects? And more specifically, what is the added value that creativity and arts may have in the process of understanding and acceptance of differences?

**Connecting Cultures**, together with **Gabi Scardi**, **Thomas Acton** and **Maria Papadimitriou**, will try to answer to these and other questions. Through critical interventions, art projects, testimonials and open discussion with the audience Roma culture and its specificities will be approached from cross-cultural and new points of view. The aim is to understand whether and how visual arts, in its many forms of expression, can contribute to making diversity a strength.

On the same occasion the book *“Mapping the Invisible. Eu-Roma Gypsies”* (Blackdog Publishing, 2010) will be presented. The book collects the experiences arising from the project Eu-Rome conducted together with the gypsy communities in Romania, Greece, Italy and the UK. A visually engaging account sure to inform and inspire anyone with an interest in human rights, contemporary architecture, visual art, design and social sustainability.



## **BIOGRAPHIES**

**GABI SCARDI** is a curator and art critic.

She has a strong interest in multidisciplinary practices particularly those that include an intersection between visual art and fashion, architecture, design and urban culture and transformation.

2007-2010 she is collaborating with the Maxxi, the National Museum of XXI Century Arts, Rome.

2005-2009 she was the Contemporary Art Advisor to the Province of Milan

Between 2007 and 2009 she curated CECAC (European Course for Contemporary Art Curators) - Fondazione Ratti, Como, Italy and Province of Milan.

2000-2004 she headed the Archivio degli Artisti C/O Careof-Viafarini, Milan and the exhibition program of Viafarini.

She curated exhibitions, projects and public interventions. Among the recent ones: Spazio, opening exhibition of Maxxi, 2010; Fikret Atay, Viafarini, Milan 2010; TAMA Side Effects within Lyon Biennale; Alfredo Jaar, It is Difficult, Spazio Oberdan, Hangar Bicocca (with Bartolomeo Pietromarchi); Alfredo Jaar, Questions Questions, public project, Milan, 2008; LESS, Strategie alternative dell'abitare, PAC Padiglione d'arte Contemporanea (Pavilion for Contemporary Art), Milan, 2006; LESS#1 Alternative Living Strategies, section of Gwangju Design Biennale 2007; Wherever We Go, Ovunque Andiamo (co-curated with Hou Hanru), Spazio Oberdan, Milan and SFAI San Francisco Art Institute 2007; Drink Water, Lucy e Jorge Orta, Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation, Venice 2006.

She is currently working on the publication Landscape with figure; art, public sphere, social transformation, ed. Allemandi (autumn 2010) and on the exhibition GSK Contemporary - Aware: Art Fashion Identity, Royal Academy, London (November 2010).

She teaches modules on Contemporary Art and Public Art at: Politecnico di Milano, Faculty of Design, Milan; Università Bicocca, Faculty of Sociology, Milan; Domus Academy, Milan; Università Cattolica, Milan.

She is a correspondent for the Sunday cultural supplement of the newspaper "Il Sole 24 Ore" and she regularly contributes to national and international magazines.

## **THOMAS ACTON**

### **Qualifications**

1955 - 1965: Brentwood School, Essex: 12 O-levels, 3 A-levels, 2 S-Levels

1966 - 1969: Trinity College, Oxford, Minor Scholarship: B.A.Hons. (Second Class) PPE

1969 - 1972: Nuffield College, Oxford, SSRC Scholarship: D.Phil. in Sociology and M.A., 1974

1978 - 1987: Polytechnic of Central London, PT. Cantonese Chinese

### **Professional Experience**

1997 - Present: Professor of Romani Studies

1994 : Promoted to Principal Lecturer Grade, University of Greenwich

1989 : Reader in Romani Studies, Thames Polytechnic

1981 : Senior Lecturer (by promotion) in the Sociology of Social Policy, Thames Polytechnic.

1977- 81: Lecturer Grade II, Thames Polytechnic.

1974 - 77: Research Fellow in Social Policy, Thames Polytechnic.

1973 - 74: Part-Time: Supply Teacher , I.L.E.A. & Revision Tutor Dartford CFE

1973 - 74: Full-Time: Manager, Justin de Blank Provisions Ltd. London SW1.

1970 - 73: Part-time: Various Oxford Colleges: Tutoring and revision class lectures.

1966: Full-time A. Driver and operative, Crown Cleaners, Brentwood, Essex.

B. Assembly line worker, H.Moeller, Bonn, West Germany.

### **Recent Publications**

#### Research Interests

Romani Studies, Sociology of Health, Social Policy for Older People, Chinese fishing and canal-boat communities.

#### Edited Books

'Counter-Hegemony and the Post-Colonial Other' Acton, Thomas & Hayes, Michael. Cambridge Scholars Press 2006

#### Book Chapters

'Some problems in bringing the Dialects and Culture of smaller Romani groups into the School curriculum' in *Counter-Hegemony and the Irish* Other eds T.Acton & M.Hayes Cambridge Scholars Press 2006

'No Promised Land: Romani Politics, Scholarship and the Discourse of Nation-Building' in *Gypsies and the Problem of Identities*, London and Istanbul. IB Tau (eds Marsh A and Strand E). 2006

'Modernity, Culture and "Gypsies": Is there a Meta-Scientific Method to Understand the Representation of Gypsies? And do the Dutch Really Exist?' in N.Saul & S.Tebbutt *The Role of the Romanies* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press) 2004

'The Gypsies' B.Lalor Ed. *The Encyclopaedia of Ireland* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan 2003

'Theorizing Gypsy Law' Acton, Thomas (with Caffrey & Mundy) in *Gypsy Law: Romani Legal Traditions and Culture* ed. W.O Weyrauch, Berkeley: University of California Press 2001



'Citizens of the World and Nowhere: Minority, Ethnic and Human Rights for Roma' Acton, Thomas (with Gheorghe) in *Between Past and Future: The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press 2001

'The International Romani Union - An Eastern European Answer to a Western European Question? Shifts in the Focus of World Romani Congress 1971-2000' *Between Past and Future: The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press 2001

#### Journal Articles

'Nomads in No-Man's Land' (with Bickerstaffe, Rodney and Mercer, Peter) in the Tribune 10 May 2006

'Meetings with Milena' in *Romano Dzhani* Volume 13 2006

'Conflict Resolution and Criminal Justice – Sorting out Trouble: Can legislation resolve perennial conflicts between Roma/Gypsies/Travellers and 'National Minorities.' in *Journal of Legal Pluralism* Volume 51 (Lit Verlag, Berlin) 2006

'Charles Smith - Gypsy Activist, Poet and Film Maker (Obituary)' *The Guardian* 2005

'Human Rights as a Perspective on Entitlements: The Debate Over "'Gypsy" Fairs in England' in *Essex Human Rights Review* 2004 Vol.1 (1)

<http://projects.essex.ac.uk/ehrr/>

'Sir Angus Fraser 1928-2001' in *Nationalities Papers* Volume 31 2003

'Response to Barany' in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Volume 26 (2) 2003

'A three-Cornered Choice: Structural Consequences of Value-Priorities in Gypsy Law as a Model for a More General Understanding of Variations in the Administration of Justice' in the *American Journal of Comparative Law* Volume 50 (3) 2003

'Horsmonden Survey' in *The HUB Newsletter of the Gypsy Council* (1) Spring 2003

'Weer Rajendra Rishi 1917-2002' *The HUB Newsletter of the Gypsy Council* (1) Spring 2003

'Roma Millenium' in *Church and Race* 2002

'Traveller Education Publications - A Genre Coming of Age?' in *Books for Keeps, Journal of the School Bookshop Association* 2002

#### Conference Contributions

*Knowledge/Power: Identity/History; Paradigmatic constraints on Romani Studies*. Congress of the International Institute of Sociology, Stockholm. 2005 & 37th World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology, Stockholm. 2005

*Languages Without a Written Tradition*. Kent CC Minorities Achievement Service Conference, Univ. of Greenwich 2005

*No Promised Land: Romani Politics, Scholarship and the Discourse of Nation-Building* International Romani Studies Conference, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul. April 2003

*Donner le Panorama Des Faits Historiques Concernant Les Roms- Ouvrir Des Pistes Pour Travail Dans Ateliers...* French Education Ministry: Summer University, University of Burgandy, Dijon June 2003

*Gypsy History, Romani Studies & the Roma Emancipation Movement Belonging and Boundaries: The Role of Romani History and its Re-Writing*, The Malmo Museum 2003

*The Patterns and Politics of Roma Migration in Europe. Conference on Roma and Asylum in Britain: Global Issues, Local Concerns*. University of Newcastle upon Tyne 2003

*Private Primary Health Care, Health Behaviour and Public Health Issues: The Example of Chinese Medicine*. Acton, Thomas (with Xue-Qing, Kelly) Association of Public Health Conference, Cardiff. International Exhibition Centre 2003

*Romani Studies and Romani Politics: Teasing Out Models of the Relationship Between Research Scholarships and Government Policies* Annual Conference of the Gypsy Lore Society, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor 2003

*Mainstream and Alternative Marketing Strategies for Traditional Chinese Medicine in London*. Acton, Thomas (with Jiang-Xue-Qing & MPT Kelly). Making Sense of Health, Illness and Disease Conference, St. Catherine's College Oxford 2002

*Could the Un Projet Europeen De Formation Pour La Scolarisation Des Enfants Tsiganes* Council of Europe Project, Dijon teacher training College December 2002

*Use of the Romani Language in Schools be a Trojan Horse for Multi-Lingualism For All?* Romani Education Conference, University of Gothenburg, Sweden 2001

*Lecture to Oxford University Amnesty Group*, New College Oxford 2001

*Special Lecture on the Situation of Roma*, Manchester Metropolitan University 2001

*'Historical Roots of Romani and Traveller Exclusion'* Rural Development Project, Gypsy and Traveller National Training Conference Hitchin Educational Resource Centre 2001

*'Romani History and Traveller Education'* London Borough of Greenwich Education Inspectorate, Multicultural Education Conference 2001

#### Reports

*Better Government for Older People with Eime Tobari*, Hussain Mark and Noel Campbell for the London Borough of Greenwich 2004

*Report on the Organisation of the Second Site Exhibition* ACERT / University of Greenwich, 2006

#### Reviews



'Review of Derrington and Kendall "Gypsy Traveller Students in Secondary Schools", Marks "Traveller Education, Changing Times" and Tyler "Traveller Education: Accounts of Good Practice" in the *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* Volume 27 (4)

Review of D.J.Nemeth "The Gypsy-American: An Ethnographic Study" in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* Volume 31 2005

Review of Istva'n Pog'ny, THE ROMA CAFÉ: Human Rights and the Plight of the Romani people in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Volume 28 (4) 2005

Review of D.J. Nemeth "The Gypsy-American: An Ethnographic Study" in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* Volume 31 (2) 2005

Review of David Mayall. Gypsy Identities 1500-2000; from Egipcians and moon-men to the ethnic romany in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Routledge: London 2004

Review of Hancock I/, "We are the Romani People" and Werbner P. "Imagined Diasporas among Manchester Muslims" in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 2003

Review of T. Coughlan 'Now Shoon the Romani Gilli' in *The George Borrow Bulletin* 2001

Review of Alaina Lemon 'Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romani Memory from Pushkin to Postsocialism in the *American Sociologist* 2001 in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration studies*

Review of Z.Barany "The East European Gypsies" and Y.Matras "Romani: A Linguistic Introduction" in the *American Journal of Sociology* Volume 108 (4) 2003

#### Other

Invited Participant Reporting on the UK: Council of Europe Conference on the Harmonisation of Teaching Materials in Romani Language Palais de L'Europe Strasbourg 26-27 May 2003

Exhibition programme 'The Roma/Gypsies/Travellers - a tale of two genocides' Programme of the London International Gypsy Film Festival London: Curzon Soho Cinema 2006. Also programmes for 'Ferdinand Koci' 'Damian Le Bas'.

#### **Research and External Funding**

2003: Greenwich Council £27,000+ Better Governance of Older People

2002: Participation with Univ. of Paris V in EU network on Trav.Ed. training resources.

2001 - 02: Gypsy Council survey of Horsmonden residents, Kent

1999: British Council: Visit to Bulgaria to advise on Multicultural training

1997: Participant in School of Social Science Research Centre (HEFC funding)

1996: July 9-12. QR funding for Romani Studies Research. £56,000

1993 - 94: ESRC funding for Romani Studies Research Seminar Series UK £8,900

1993: Project on Ethnic Relations £1550: Gypsies in Bulgaria (with I.Iliev, Sofia University)

1993: European Commission: Development of Romani Encyclopaedia Project 2500 ECUs

1991- 92: EC funded research with Etudes Tsiganes on EC regulation of migration (c F.Fr.10,000)

1988: March - April : U.S.A. and Hong Kong research: British Academy, ILEA HERSEF, and the US Embassy (c£1,200 in total)

1986: British Council-sponsored individual research visit to Hungary.

1985 - 86: EEC Social Commission F.Fr. 17,000: Gypsy Education (plus sabbatical term)

1984: French Ministry of Education F.Fr. 7.000: Gypsy Education

1984: Conferences on Languages without a written tradition: British Council (£288), Greater London Council (£2,000), and from other local authorities.

1980: British Academy (£987) for fieldwork in China and Hong Kong on Fisherfolk and Canal-Boat Dwellers.

1980: Commission for Racial Equality (for National Gypsy Education Council) £10,000

1977: City Parochial Foundation (for National Gypsy Education Council) £3,500

In addition, I have been grant-aided for international conferences by the governments of France, Czech Republic, Hungary, and former Yugoslavia, and by the European Community. I have also attended research conferences in Sweden, Bulgaria, Poland, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and the United States, usually with external funding, and attended an OSCE meeting in Warsaw on attachment to the Foreign Office.

Research Doctorate Supervision

2 PhD candidates supervised to completion, 7 currently being supervised (2 external, LSE, Exeter,).



**MARIA PAPADIMITRIOU** studied Visual Arts at the ENSBA Paris (1981-1986). She is known as an artist for her ability to investigate collaborative projects and collective activities that highlight the interconnection between art and social reality. In 1998 she started to work with a Roma community in the suburbs of Athens. The nomadic way of living and the particularities of the community gave her the idea of setting up a system of communication and exchange among the inhabitants, herself, the art people and the public. This system is called T.A.M.A. (Temporary Autonomous Museum for all ). From 2001 she teaches at the department of Architecture at Thessaly University and now holds the title of Associate Professor of Art and Environment.

#### **Selected solo shows**

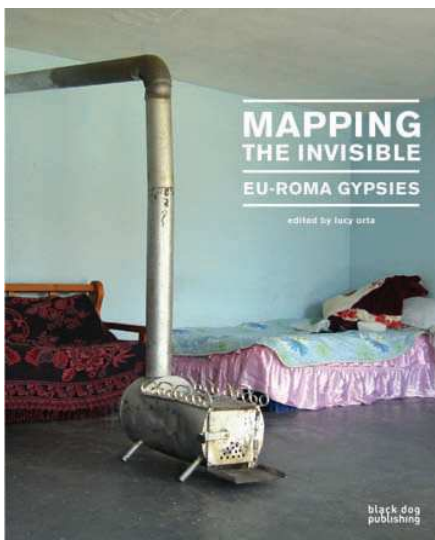
- 2010 Hotel Balkan, Haifa Mediterranean Biennial, Haifa
- 2009 Infinito fa rumore eternita fa Silenzio, Mercato Coperto, Regio Emilia, Italy
- 2008 CORBU, Zina Athnasiadou gallery, Thessaloniki, Greece
- 2007 Novocomum on Wheels, Direct Architecture, Politics and Space  
Borgovico33, Como, Italy
- 2006 HOTEL PLUG -INN, Castillo de San Gabriel, Lanzarote, 1st Bienal de Arquitectura, Arte  
Paisaje de Canarias, Spain
- 2005 Two or three things I know about him, Rifleman Gallery, London, England.
- 2004 We'll meet again, Espacio Uno, Museo Nacional Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain.
- 2002 T.A.M.A. (Temporary Autonomous Museum for) 25th Biennial Sao Paulo, Brazil.

#### **Selected group shows**

- 2010 The Ark, Greek Pavilion, Venice Biennial, Venice  
Pop Up Sinope, Sinope Biennial, Turkey
- 2009 Side Effects, 10th Lyon Biennial,
- 2008 Ideal Homes, Casa del Lago, Mexico City, Mexico,
- 2007 Volksgarten Politics of Belonging, Kunsthau, Graz, Austria  
Habitation Variation BAC - Bâtiment d'art contemporain, Geneva, Swiss
- 2006 LESS alternative living strategies Pavillion of Contemporary Art, Milan, Italy.
- 2005 Mira como se mueven, Telefonica Foundation, Madrid, Spain.
- 2004 Staying or leaving, Camera Austria, Kunsthause, Graz, Austria.
- 2003 Outlook, Factory, Athens, Greece.  
IN DEN SCHLUCHTEN DES BALKAN, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany.
- 2002 Manifesta 4, Frankfurt, Germany.  
Balkania 2002, Neue Galerie, Graz, Austria.

#### **Awards**

- 2003 Deste Prize for Contemporary Greek Art, DESTE Foundation, Athens, Greece.



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**This event is organised by**

**Connecting Cultures** is a non profit research agency based in Milan, Italy active in the field of the Visual Arts. Founded by Anna Detheridge contemporary art curator and theorist in 2001, Connecting Cultures is committed to an inclusive approach to culture and an action research based method of working in the public realm.

We work with artists, designers architects and performers, and the public attempting to bring them together in meaningful ways. Our approach is interdisciplinary and cross cultural.

Our aims are:

- \* promoting collective awareness of resources and potential of the local
- \* providing opportunities for cross cultural exchange
- \* implementing ideas for urban ecologies
- \* acting as catalysts for change and a sustainable future

**Contemporary Art Archive**

Our visual arts library is open to the public, is constantly updated and offers information and services to art students and scholars, and professional people – from architects, landscape developers and town planners.

The library is careful to maintain a lively dialogue with an heterogeneous public, thanks to a monthly newsletter and the new web magazine **Artsoup**.

The library also receives and classifies documents from personal and gallery archives of importance promoting new research and publications such as the Fondo Maria Colao, part of the archive of the Roman Galleria Primo Piano.

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**INFO**  
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<b>EVENT</b>	<b>"Mapping the invisible. EU-Roma Gypsies"</b> <b>Blackdog Publishing</b>
<b>CURATED BY</b>	Connecting Cultures
<b>LOCATION</b>	Centro di Documentazione Arti Visive of Connecting Cultures Via Giorgio Merula 62, 20142 Milano h. 7.00 pm
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