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Irena Lagator Pejovic: Si prega di attendere qui/Please wait here, exhibition catalogue edited by Ilaria Mariotti, galleria Macchi in collaboration with Fondazione TESECO per l'Arte, Pisa, Italy, 2005

Ilaria Mariotti

Please Wait Here

For her installation, *Please Wait Here*, Irena Lagator uses space in a deconsecrated Romanesque abbey, San Zeno, which is a special monument in the history of the town of Pisa. Located close to the medieval town wall, many years ago San Zeno was one of the richest and most powerful religious centers in the surrounding area. Deconsecrated in 1809, the abbey was used for a long time as a storehouse, but at present it hosts cultural events and manifestations.

Outside the abbey, there is a yellow line and a sign requesting visitors to wait for their turn to enter. This involves waiting, joining a line and taking one's turn. We often wait in line for services: to pay bills, at the post-office, at the bank, in public offices and to get on a bus. We always have to wait in line in order to pay for services. We can do our best to construct a rationale or propose a creative solution to the ordeal of waiting,¹ but our acceptance of waiting status is usually "rewarded" with something tangible such as a ticket, a number, a promise of service to come.

The experience that awaits us inside the old church has somewhat to do with material. Long, colored strings, lines that represent all the colors of the spectrum, descend from the building's trusses, forming, in the center of the church, a light, vigorous and practicable parallelepiped. This is an image that catches our eyes and is elaborated by our brain. This image gets trapped by the first of these receptors as well as by the other. The strings move as we pass by, they shift and wave and interlace themselves. They color our

¹ Roberto Casati e Vittorio Girotto, *Soluzioni creative, workshop*, done for the Festival della Mente di Sarzana, 2005, Saturday, September 3rd. See www.soluzioncreative.blogspot.com.

This is about the expectation of people waiting in one or more lines in front of windows and the suggestion that only one line can be, among other things, a creative solution that avoids the frustration of having chosen the wrong line.

senses and get structured in points that give the tiny wefts associative and perceptive possibilities. ...

At the exit of the church, we encounter a second sign, identical to the first at the entrance, which requires visitors again to wait their turn. This experience of the real and the daily seems like the continuation of the service and of the gift, which are a desired intention as well as a moment of our expectation.

This is the first installation in which the artist worked in space, in the construction of a device for the perception of space, exploring the relation between reality (light) and its representation through material, color and form using thin colored strings that deeply modify perception. The work is also understood as a process, an intentional point of visitor involvement (waiting at both entrance and exit). A visitor who enters this space adapts his systems of perception and emotions, adjusting them before and during the evolving of the experience. Contemporaneously, the artist creates something tangible through the fluidity and versatility of the material. The visitors are stimulated to walk around the parallelepiped and, at the same time, to change their perception of the whole. The colored strings, if they are seen from a little distance, change their chromatic shade in relation to those immediately next to them. The whole (beam of light) modifies itself in the dimension of time and space, which on one hand dilates itself, on the other hand narrows itself.

The four very lofty parallelepipeds of strings, of which the installation is made, form huge shapes that one can pass through or avoid by choice. These are actions for which the visitor has to take responsibility. In one case, the strings swing, get wrapped around each other, stick to the visitors' bodies; in the other case they are avoided. The visitor becomes involved in a space rich in suggestion, where the materiality takes the form of emptiness and fullness made of lines, colors and light that come from many holes in the space. An echo of this work, an enquiry of uninhabited and potentially virtual spaces, reverberates in prints of Lagator's recent work, *Inverse Space* (2009).