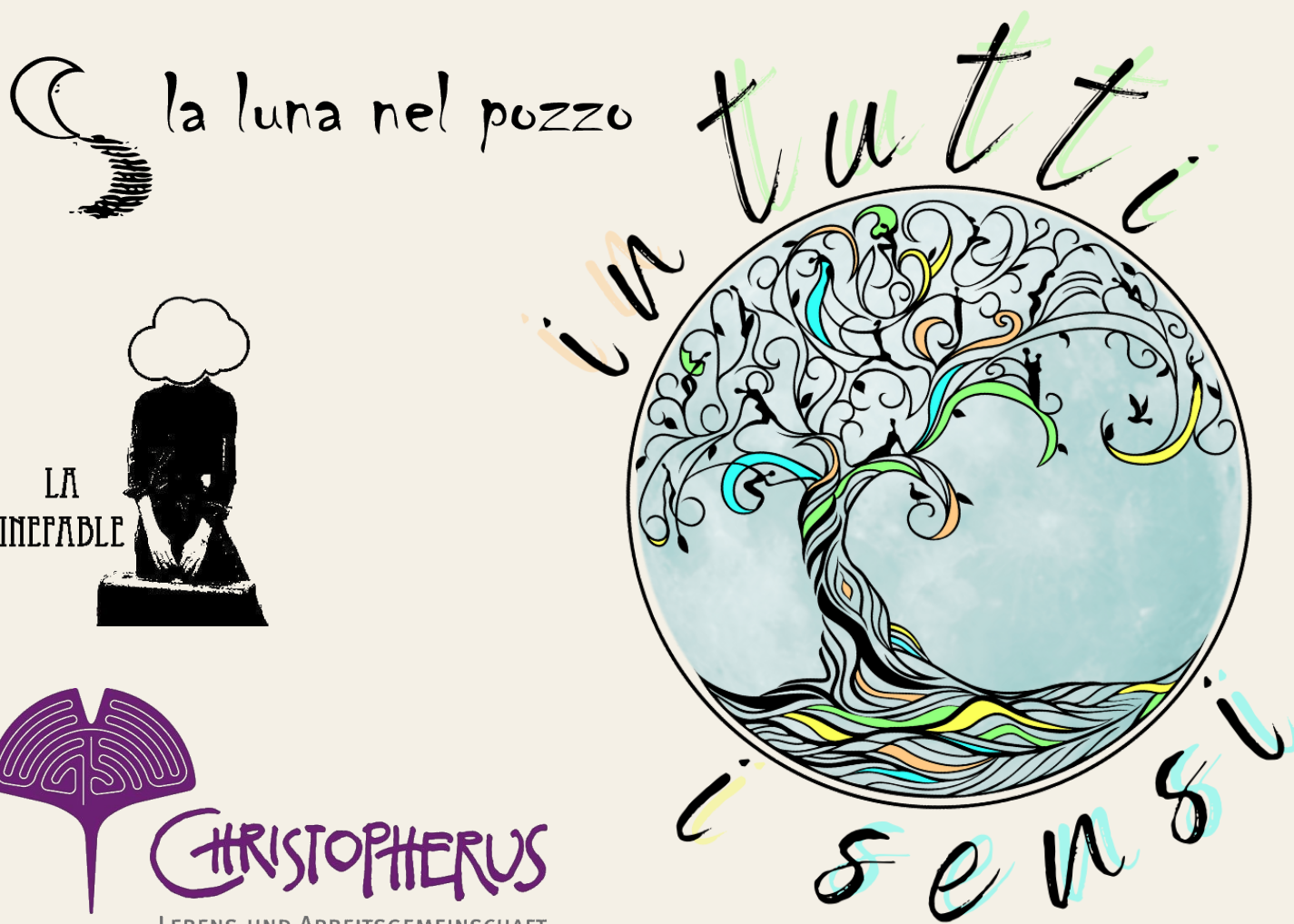


# IN TUTTI I SENSI - AN ARTISTIC RESEARCH

*final reflections*



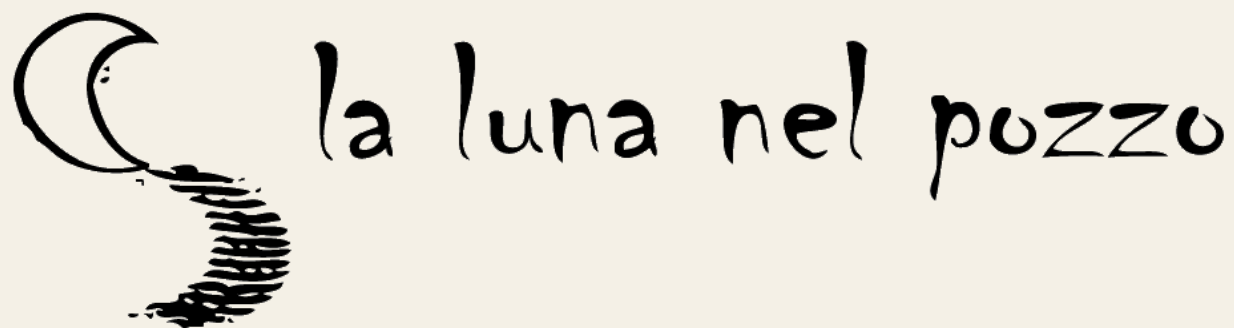
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This is an exploration of the artistic, social and philosophical principals animating the **Erasmus+ Project “In Tutti i Sensi”** led by “**La Luna nel Pozzo**”, in partnership with “**Christopherus - Eins un Alles**” (Germany) and “**La Inefable**” (Spain)

The intentions of our project are to explore in a systematic manner the synergy in the ongoing research of the above-mentioned partners, and to leave an “intellectual product”, including the present document, in the hopes of stimulating further research in other organizations.



*Click on the moons to find out more about our project !*

# “Disability” & “Autonomy”

## Our defining terms

For more than two decades **we at La Luna** have practiced **theater clowning** together with **people with disabilities**, in our case primarily those with cognitive disabilities.

“People with disabilities” is the current preferred term, although we find it inadequate to our specific experience.

Likewise, the term “Autonomy”, fundamental principal in our work, merits some examination, as it risks becoming depleted of meaning through careless repetition.

As both these terms are fundamental to our discussion, we begin with a careful examination of terminology.

First, “Disability”. This term implies an impeded, or even nonexistent ability, literally “the opposite of ability”. As a verb, to “dis” is to scorn, to “talk down”.

**In the context of our theatrical clown work, this term makes no sense at all!**

**Theater is of course the Art of Communication.** While it is true that by the superficial measure of communication in our day-to-day life, those with cognitive “disabilities” are often challenged, in the context of theater, on the other hand, the picture changes dramatically.

In the theatrical context, which is not only tolerant, but positively welcoming of ambiguity, the mutual effort made to understand and be understood — between actor and actor, actor and director, actor and audience — creates a language field in which the exposition of the inner life of the participants, fueled by willed imagination, is often reciprocal and joyfully exponential. *In other words, the more you invest, the more you receive.*

Theater communicates on many levels: visual/spatial | rhythmical/musical  
| kinesthetic | emotional | sensorial

**The cognitive is but a small part of theater’s expressive range!**

Theater operates through the complex language of empathy, and our actors tend to have highly developed empathetic skills. **Empathy** is a high form of intelligence unfortunately generally ignored by the cognitive institutions most of us grew up with.

At this point, the term “disability” is just silly. We prefer the term “**differently abled**”, but it is important to recognize that in the context of clowning,

“Differently Abled” often **means more able, and not less so.**



“**Autonomy**” is likewise a much-used term in the context of our work.



It comes from the Greek, which means simply, “having its own rules”.

In biology, it means that the organism is beholden to no other, living an independent life; socially, it means that one’s actions depend on no one else’s: they are independent.

However, those who study biology or sociology know that independence is a problematic concept: both the natural and the social are governed, not by independence, but by interdependence.

None of us, plant, or animal, is independent, but we all, and always, live in relationship to the world which surrounds us.

In this context, “autonomy”, like “disability”, risks taking us into a bloodless, phantom world, not actually living and breathing.

Of course, we understand the importance of supporting an environment in which every individual is free to explore their own needs and desires without being beholden to careless or maleficent authority. It is an ethical imperative that every member of society continuously practices the support and the encouragement of every other in mutual growth, but it is fundamental to recognize that growth is just that, mutual.

In the beautiful words of Robin Wall Kimmerer, *All flourishing is mutual*.

Again, it is the **talent for empathy** which **we need to learn, not to teach** to our differently abled friends. In this way, “inclusion” becomes, not a gesture of pity or obligation, but an eager reaching out, to enrich our own experience, together with the other, whoever that other might be.



# Coming home to Nature



And that inclusion explores the non-human, as well as the human realm. Here at La Luna we are surrounded, embraced by nature. Nature continues to teach us interdependence, beauty, community.

The ethos of the natural world which surrounds us has permeated our work for the last 25 years, becoming a central tenet to everything we do. More than 15 years ago we planted 5000 plants here, half of them the local types of oak, the rest a mix of indigenous Mediterranean bushes. After years of intensive care, of nurturing the plants through the dry summer months, we have observed with pleasure how this rich biodiverse mix has taken on its own autonomous life, a microclimate which hosts a wealth of animals and birds.



This experience has instructed our artistic work here: we recognize also in the human, theatrical garden when it is time to water, when to prune, and when to judiciously let things take their natural course. And always in a comfortable, loving manner, inviting our guests to feel at home. Before we came to this place, it was a residential gestalt therapy center, called “La Casa: Home”.

“**Home**”. There is a deep truth in that name. The nature of our work, be it theatrical, gardening, land-art, care of animals or human guests, has the fundamental quality of coming home. La Luna nel Pozzo is a kind of home of the spirit.

*(The most common feedback we get from guests, whether visiting for an evening or a month, is “Here I feel at home.”)*

# The Universe is Biodiverse

Our explicit goal is to celebrate biodiversity in nature and in the social. Our “**Orthia**” project— a huge regenerative garden space also inhabited by chickens, donkeys and goats, is nurtured by an inclusive team of caregivers.

It is from our “**Orthia**” project, that the Erasmus+, “In Tutti Sensi” (“In Every Sense”) was born. We were, and are, interested in exploring the world of biodiversity, **with all our senses**, not just the cognitive. We sensed that our theatrical and agricultural projects, with their wealth of “other” intelligences, could fund a wider exploration, together with like-minded organizations.



This project brings into dialogue more than one powerful place: the regenerative garden of “Orthia”, in the heart of la Luna nel Pozzo; “Eins und Alles”, an inclusive German work- and residential community, and “LaInefable”, which although based in Barcelona, has no fixed geographical location— a kind of Ithaca of the heart.

We are all of us —“**La Luna**”, “**Eins und Alles**” and “**La Inefable**”— **concerned with disability, but in an extremely inclusive manner**, recognizing that autonomy and its mirror reflection, interdependence, are fundamental questions for all the inhabitants of this planet, human and other.

In this way we listen for a non-cognitive resonance, that is, a wavelength which is not concerned with distinctions and labels, one in which the fundamental dignity of each individual can contribute to a future which is truly regenerative.



## One and All!

- a café and coffee roasting laboratory
- an organic restaurant
- an animal “oasis”
- an interactive “perception museum”
- a sensory sculpture park
- a “blind house”, to be explored without sight

**All of these attractions are staffed by people with a wide spectrum of abilities.**

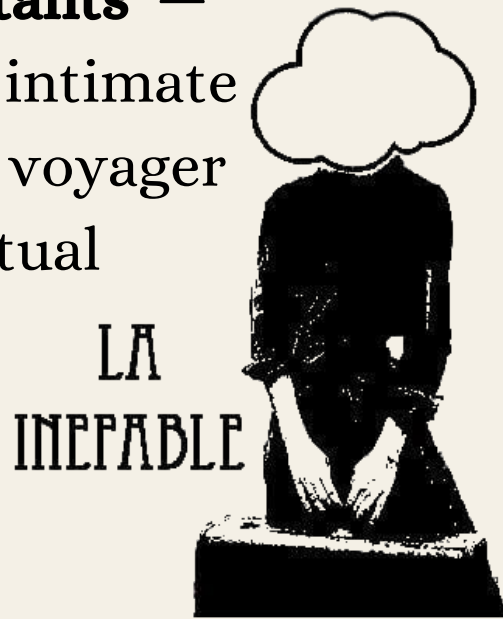
**Eins und Alles** is an inclusive work- and residential community near Stuttgart. La Luna has had the privilege and pleasure of collaborating with them theatrically for the last several years. In this ongoing project, we have annually coproduced an inclusive international theater production for their autumn “KunstSinnFestival” since 2017.

Their community is based on anthroposophical principles: They operate in the understanding that the spirit of those with and without disabilities are of equal dignity, needs, and capacities for development. Consequently, persons with and without disabilities have equal standing in the community. The subsequent dialogue is articulated in innovative and perhaps unexpected ways.

Nestled in the forested hills outside of Welzheim, the visitor to Eins und Alles (a good weekend can see 2000 visitors, between families, school classes, art and nature lovers) will find...

# “La Inefable”: an Ithaca of the Heart

The Barcelona-based company “La Inefable” practices **sensorial theater**. In this context the actors inhabit a space— consequently calling themselves “**inhabitants**”— who welcome the spectator, or “voyager”, into an intimate relational space. This offers an opportunity for the voyager to return to a sensorial world, richer than the habitual cognitive one of our day-to-day life. This is **oracular theater**: it doesn’t use words to tell the brain what to think, but rather invokes the senses, a deep, pre-verbal language, to accompany the voyager into the profound sense-memories of the body. It can be a moving and emotional experience for the voyagers, often stimulating them to deep and satisfying reflection on their own place in the world, their own “home”. **Like Ulysses, they can learn to carry their home in their heart.**



# Body Trips and Spirit Voyages

Together with our German and Spanish partners, we have designed a project in which to learn from one another, while stimulating a relaxed and creative space of exploration for those of all abilities. In this environment, the participants can cultivate an expanding awareness of their own often unexpected skills and capacities, and most importantly, of how the creative space can expand exponentially, when it is fed by the great diversity of our sensibilities.

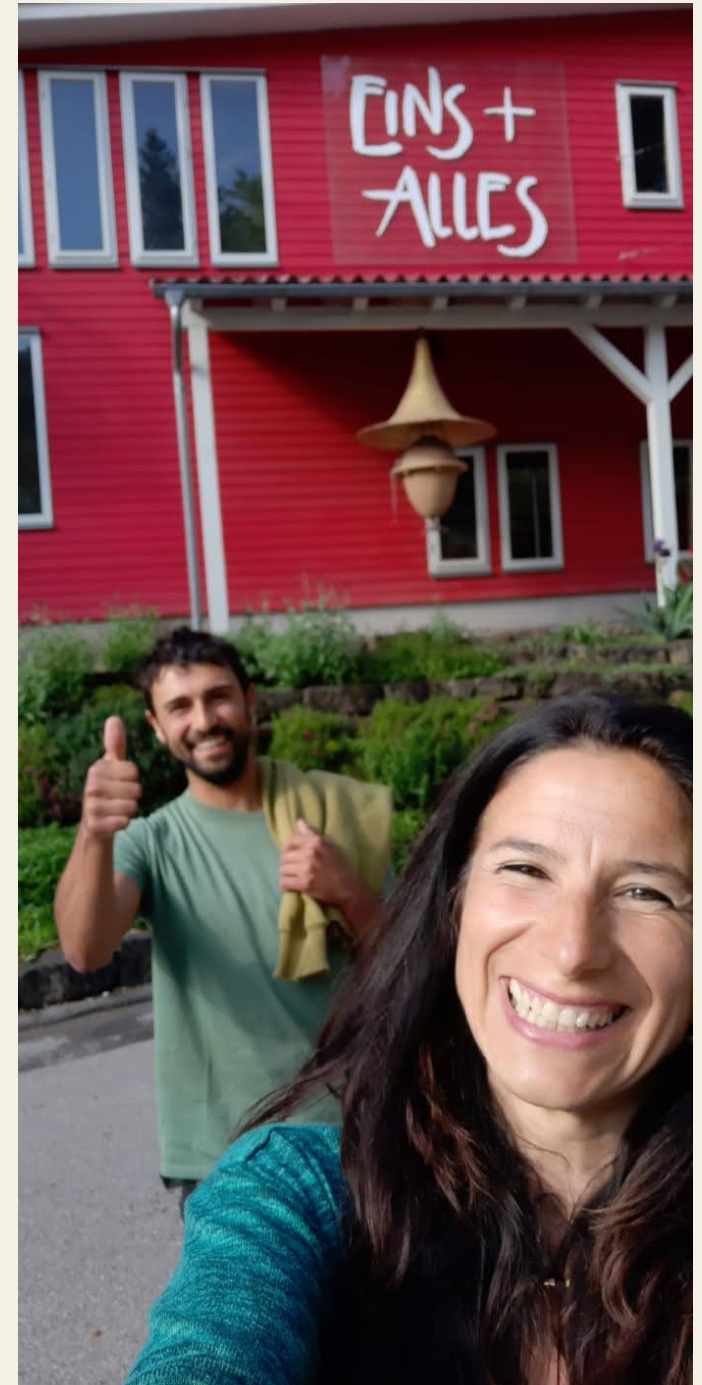
We arranged to have representatives of all three organizations present to the work of the others. In this way we could begin to develop a common vocabulary, between the sometimes surprising congruities, as well as the divergences, in our different approaches.

Here follows a reflection on the nature of that interaction, throughout the workshops, and the final workshop/conference/festival.

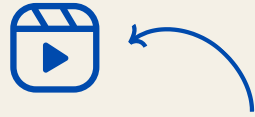
# Weaving the Tapestry...

Spring 22

Our first exchange was a reconnaissance regarding work with animals. Two members of our la Luna team visited the “animal oasis” at “Eins und Alles”, where an inclusive team cares for chickens, lamas, horses, donkeys, goats, rabbits, bees and butterflies, also educating visitors (schools, families, tourists) on the needs and qualities of these animals. We learned that the relationship between the caregivers and the animals is mutually beneficial. All parties thrive on a fundamental empathy which is nonverbal and non cognitive: autistic as well as cognitive-challenged caregivers can really shine in this caring environment.



Early Summer 22



We hosted here at La Luna a **sensorial theater workshop**, in which about 20 mixed needs participants accompanied one another, under the expert guidance of “La Inefable”, on a remarkable memory voyage.







Often with our eyes closed, we ritually washed one another's hands, played with the sound and feel of water, explored rich olfactory environments, even immersed ourselves in the smell and feel of our favorite clothing... We touched and smelled the earth, tasted fruits and carefully described and evoked the feelings that these experiences engendered, weaving a loving web of care.

This tapestry of affection was tangible and very moving, especially when we then guided our parents, our brothers and sisters and friends, through a loving labyrinth of memory and relationship. In this way, the nature of the work entered immediately into the family.

Already in this first encounter we were struck by the profound affinity of our approaches.



# Eyes of Love

Our **Lunarc clowning** work is grounded in what the humanist psychologist **Carl Rogers** called “unconditional positive regard”. In a beautiful image, he compares looking at a human being to looking at a sunset:

*“When I look at a sunset, I don't find myself saying, ‘Soften the orange a bit on the right hand corner.’ I don't try to control a sunset. I watch with awe as it unfolds.” (Rogers, 1980)*

This sense of nonjudgmental play is at the heart of **Lunarc clowning**. It is the gaze offered by eyes of love, not incidentally an attitude in which our cognitively-challenged friends are masters. This is the spirit which permeates the activities of all three partners of the “Tutti i Sensi” project, a philosophy which unites us.

Autumn 2022



The joy of the clown was our guiding light in the next workshop, led by la Luna at the “Eins und Alles” center. Here, with about 25 mixed-needs participants, we continued exploring the play between the inner, imaginative life, and the outer expression of that life. If the work with “La Inefable” immerses us in the deep imaginative reverie of memory, that of “La Luna” invites us to a vibrant expression of that imaginative life. Dance, rhythmical play, song and silliness are celebrated in full, in a constant exchange of seeing and being seen.



Spring 2023



“La Inefable” came to Germany to lead a workshop with about 25 of their residents. Again, they led a rich voyage into the meanders of sense-memory.

Some feedback from the participants:

*“I thought it would be like clowning. But it’s rather about looking inward, of finding your way to a moment of calm, of touching that calm inside...”*

The participants noted a growing sense of trust over the 5 days of work, both trust in oneself, and in the surrounding environment, which led to a feedback which was at the same time more intense, more precise and more calm, reflecting and celebrating the precious diversity of each individual.

*“Every day the atmosphere was more calm, more attentive...we didn’t make a show, but through the calm and the silence there was a real theatrical tension. Incredible!”*

It’s interesting to see how aware the caregivers were of their own personal growth, beyond what they observed in those with disabilities. More than one mentions learning a deeper sense of empathy:

*“I discover that I don’t need to carry conclusions from one person to another...each has a precious, and different way of meeting the world, and that’s just what makes each person so beautiful...”*

The changes were palpable:



*“Each of us found new qualities inside. The timid found courage, the chatterboxes learned to adjust to the calm of the group. Taking care of someone who doesn’t see, you come out of yourself to be in their skin. Beautiful to see how the egoists can step back and leave space for the other...”*

*“So many experiences with so few instruments!  
Just close your eyes and listen for a moment, it’s like magic...”*

*“I will find ways to bring little sensorial moments into my work here every day...Beautiful!”*

Spring 2023



We followed with a Lunarclowning workshop here at la Luna, the last “mono-theme workshop” before the final festival event. Participants noted a changed sense of their own bodies:

*“Trusting the others, I found my body became softer. I could better adapt to those around me...more subtle, lighter, more graceful and open... beauty and gratitude!”*

*“I feel we were all breathing together, but also that nature was breathing us!”*

*“Happy to be in myself, playing with the others!”*



*“I feel my voice differently...connected to my body, full, without fear of not being heard, of disappearing into the void...”*

*“My body opened like a flower...”*

**They noted surprises:**

*“How easy to change points of view. I feel lighter, more together with the others...”*

*“Surprised to find how good I am at having fun...trusting surprise”*

*“How many kinds of intelligence. Beautiful!”*

*“Now I know a place like this really exists!”*

*“To find again how wonderful to play together, without thought, without ‘normopathic’ worries...”*

*“To feel my immense gratitude for SIMPLICITY...WOW!”*

*“Biodiversity is real, is communion, peace, liberty”*

*“To leave my masks behind, and play like a little girl, with wonderful people. Thank you!”*

*“Every single thing is illuminated!”*

Spring 2023



For our final event, la Luna hosted a week of workshops in sensorial theater and in clown, as well as the creation of a land-art sculpture— a magical portal to the “Orthia” garden— and an exhibition of **Tea Primiterra**’s magnificent theatrical portraits of differently abled actors, “*Onironauti*”.



This week ended with a two-day festival (sensorial and clown performances, music, a mini-fair of local gardeners and agriculturists, an “herb bar”), and a morning-long public discussion with the World Cafè participatory format on the theme of “Autonomy, Inclusion, Bidoiversity”.



Here all waters met. We organized it such that the land artist and organizers could practice clowning as well, likewise the farmers could experience sensorial theater, the experts could be joyfully inexperienced and vice-versa. We have no words to describe the joyful discoveries, the connections between the most unexpected partners: the three-year old daughter of the newly-elected mayor of Ostuni deciding to dance onstage with the clowns, his high-level meeting with the spontaneously-elected Down syndrome Mayor of La Luna, the wordless woman finding a way to borrow someone else's voice to speak her mind at the conference...



**Here are some take-homes from a few of the resident and guest artists and organizers:**

## **Luna nel Pozzo - Pia e Robert**



*“This Erasmus project is in a sense a culmination of many years of presence. Arriving here as strangers almost 40 years ago, we learned to love the hospitality of this land, and now we want to offer that hospitality, not just to people, but to ideas. Like “Tutti i Sensi”*

*“Art, social diversity and nature. To weave the world of nature’s diversity with that of the social, in the nonjudgmental way of the clown. To be filled with wonder at the way a plant lives with just water, air and earth”*

*“The ethos of place, but also of interior space, which helps us to overcome also difficult moments in our lives. This dialogue between inner and outer, like the flower, weaving life from those simple elements...”*

*“Wonderful, our last dance tonight, at the conclusion of the festival, when the clowns were dancing onstage, basically the whole audience came down to dance with them. There’s the spirit of our work, in a single image. The audience, onstage, dancing.”*

# Orthia - Natascia

*“Orthia is an inclusive project, about taking care of, and receiving care from, animals, plants and humans. In this case, “inclusive” is a very big word!*



*“I take with me the joy of these encounters in these days, like a family, but an intelligent, caring family.”*

*“The image of all of us together, musicians, artists, friends and family, walking under the wonderful artistic portal created by Hansjörg. Unforgettable!”*

## Eins+Alles - Philipp



*“After 5 days here I can say we are everyone on the same wavelength, all interested in making the most diverse people visible, in their unique beauty”*

*“I take home the profound beauty of our joyful encounter here. I’m interested in deepening the play between theater, sensory experience, clowning.”*

*“As a German, I’m struck by your wonderful Italian dolce vita organization, or non-organization! Just like in clowning, you trust that life can surprise you with the perfect solution!”*

## La Inefable - Patrizia e Giovanna

*“Here at the festival, we worked with those with cognitive disabilities, and we appreciated their profound intuitive capacities. Also that they got tired quickly, but still stayed in the game. A real intensity of presence” “And their great capacity to take care of others, very moving”*



*“We’re grateful to know Eins+Alles, so much like us, in following the importance of the sensorial with their amazing sensory park...”*

*“Inclusion of the emotions, a universal language.*

*We cultivate a place where emotions can bloom, in a continuous transformation”*



*“I take home with me an enormous gratitude for the great love that we all bring— la Inefable, La Luna nel Pozzo, Eins + Alles— the great love that we bring to our encounter— and that we receive— from our encounter with diversity! “*

*“For me, working in 4 languages here, I take home an appreciation of the body, of body language!*

*“Inclusion simply means love. That’s all”*

# Eins und Alles - Hansjörg



*“I have designed the interactive sensory installations in the forest at Eins und Alles, where you can enjoy a sensory experience, in nature”.*

*“Here at la Luna I found a remarkable dialogue between the natural and the man-made constructions, very clear intuitive motifs. The circle: the circular amphitheater, the labyrinth, the majestic circular “Orthia” regenerative garden, but especially the antique threshing circle, beside the round trullo, with its roof rising like a stone flame into the sky...”*

*“So, together with 15 companions, we built a tall portal of wood, in which we tried to evoke these ancient forms...and at the same time, building, we discovered that these long red planks, arranged in a spiral form, began moving very like the green trees surrounding them, a wonderful dialogue”*

*“I was happy to take part in the clown workshop as well, and to feel how the joy and the pleasure of improvisation infected our sculptural work, we laughed a lot!”*

*“Then too, the way the columns which make up the portal almost, but don’t quite touch, with the wonderful energy of the clown’s “two hand dance”, where the focus is empathy, the space between”*

*“It was a wonderful experience, working with such joy among people with such diverse sensibilities and cultures... such joy. People were laughing at my German jokes, without waiting for a translation! Amazing!”*





## Tara - Ilaria



*I think that collective intelligence is the maximum expression of biodiversity, made of many different ways of seeing the world: the multiplicity which we need to build a balanced future.”*

*“This morning, we created a “world cafe”, which is a way to give voice to many different points of view, by tapping into collective intelligence”*

*“This morning there was a differently abled girl who didn’t speak, and didn’t draw on the tablecloth, as people were encouraged to do. At a certain moment, someone took her hand, just gave her time, and together, witnessed by all, they constructed her contribution to the discussion. A beautiful example of biodiversity in action.”*

# Becoming the Future

The whole festival was a perfect expression of unconditional positive regard: a capacity to witness the remarkable in the ordinary, to perceive process more than result: not what you are, but what you are becoming.

This is the way we see diversity: not as an obstacle, but as a marvelous opportunity. The open-endedness of this gaze gives a sense of ongoing potential, which was tangibly present in the festival, and offers us powerful hope for the future.





