

Critical text:

Alessandro Calabrese (Trento, 1983) is an Italian artist based in Milan. After graduating in Architecture and photography his practice has focused on researching the liminal stages of the photographic image, experimenting with different techniques and materials in the attempt to translate theoretical and conceptual research into concrete realities.

Doing things properly is, still, the last line of resistance is a project curated by OTTN consisting of a series of Calabrese's reflections printed on t-shirts, all fragments of a singular hypothetical composition:

*Doing things properly is, still, the last line of resistance.
It is therefore advisable to equip yourself with enormous doses of kindness, to hold what's brief the same way you hold flowers and, if necessary, be prepared to overturn tables, because there was a time for jokes that is no more.*

This new project by Calabrese and OTTN stems from the shared will of rethinking the 'art object' and how it operates within a (given) space.

Classical exhibition venues such as gallery spaces or museum rooms aim to offer an interpretative environment that is as neutral as possible, painting their walls white in order to leave the visitor free to pour his own vision onto the works he sees.

The choice of the artist to replace the canvas with a t-shirt, a commodity of the everyday, represents an attempt to free the work of art from a static, ad hoc environment, making the art object wearable and livable: the space of action of the art object expands thus outside of its traditional contexts, permeating the social texture of life.

This specific choice finds reflection in the title of this series, particularly in the word *resistance*, which is imbued of sociopolitical connotations.

Calabrese's decision to displace his works onto independent bodies, leaving them free to stroll in cities' streets and houses' washing machines, represents a further questioning of his role as an artist. This fascination with the theme of authorship was previously investigated by him in series such as 'The Long Thing', where the final works were the results of marks left by foreign objects like paper clips, scanners and office gadgets.

The interest in the spatial dynamics of the work of art is also a recurrent theme in Calabrese's practice, studied for instance in 'A Failed Entertainment', a series in which previously taken photographs by the artist were subjected to a reverse search on the web, leading to algorithmic results that were geographically surprising and inexplicable.

The specificity of this project lies thus not so much in the issues addressed, but in the new meaning given to these previously explored topics: authorship, spatiality and randomness become here vehicles for dialogue, elements of free confrontation.

The invitation to collectively make an effort and do things right is expressed through suggestions: the written word is here not a metaphor or an iconographic symbol, but **act**.

The gratuitousness of this invitation is rooted in the belief that today more than ever change arises from empathy, compassion (from the latin con-patire= to feel together), recognizing and affirming the other as subject of potential confrontation.

The t-shirt- work of art therefore operates in this series as a double action of openness and recognition, yielding to the world where it meets and collides with the other.

The urgency of this project lies exactly in this delicate yet powerful freedom given to the artistic object, which, in times of distrust, acts like a gesture in the street: disarming in its strength, full of the courage of saying 'I'll talk to you, then I'll let you go'.