

What happens when the European dream meets the dream of migrants?

Research Cluster: Trans-Form – exploring design, art and social practices for political and eco-social transitions | Timespan: 2015 – 2017

Europa Dreaming

Team

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Starting from the local announcement of the Brenner border restoration by the Austrian government, that risks to turn South Tyrol/Alto Adige, Italy, into another symbol of the EU disintegration, Europa Dreaming is an online project that adds its own reflections to the European debate generated by the migrant crisis. What happens to the European dream when it meets the migrants dream? Is this the Europe we dreamt of? Is the Schengen Agreement the way to the European dream? Probably not. Through the statements made in the 1995 by the European politician Alexander Langer during the blocking of movement of Bosnian migrants at the Ventimiglia border (between France and Italy on the Mediterranean coast), the project reveals that not much has changed after 20 years of implementation of the Schengen Agreement, when, again in 2015, African migrants have been blocked, again, at the same border. Since 1995, the European Union lacks a shared asylum and migrant-related policies and conditions, because “the Schengen Agreement remains an agreement between police forces and of police efficiency that doesn’t seem the best European model” (A.Langer,1995).

Through an interdisciplinary team composed by a journalist, an anthropologist, an ethnoarcheologist, a photographer and a designer based in South Tyrol, Europa Dreaming repositions the actual migrant crisis on a wider timescale and, through the media coverage of some European media outlets, it reveals the complete lack of migration policies to a wider European audience. Working with a transdisciplinary team for one year on the topic, it has been possible to produce an historical research archive on European newspapers, a series of data visualisation of the 2015 asylum seekers, and qualitative interviews of the migrants who have tried to cross the Brenner pass, in order to depict the story from different points of view. This more correctly reflects the actual complexity of phenomena, in which there are no simple solutions.

Europa Dreaming has awarded with European Design Award 2017 (Bronze, digital infographics)



Figure 1. Homepage of the visual journalism project, 2016.

Across borders: the people

To better understand what happens on a daily basis around a mobile border, we interviewed a number of refugees who, on a daily basis, have made their way across from Bolzano and from the Brenner. For the most part, they were from Eritrea and were looking to reach Northern Europe. They had left their homeland because of the harsh military dictatorship and were trying to reach relatives, primarily in Germany and Sweden.

The long journey involves crossing the border with Sudan and the arrival in Khartoum, where the refugees typically remain for a few months working to raise the money necessary to continue their journey. Relying on Libyan and Eritrean smugglers, they then cross the Sahara and reach Libya, where, in Tripoli, they embark to reach Lampedusa and continue to Sicily, Rome and the Brenner pass, which is only a door that stands between them and Northern Europe. Those we interviewed all made it across.

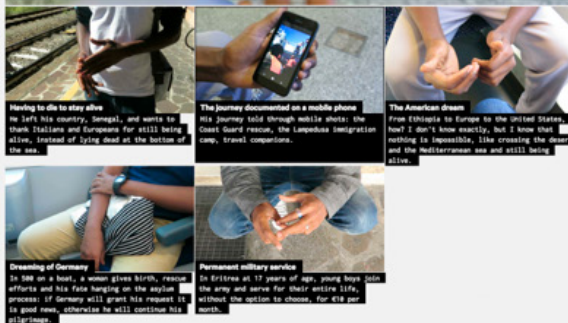
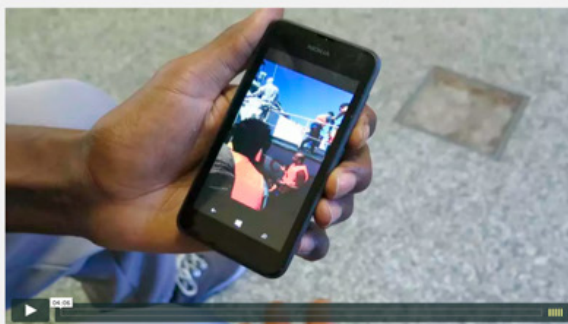


Figure 2. Qualitative interviews, 2016.



Figure 3. Data visualizations that debunks the stereotype about Chinese restaurants "invasion" in Bolzano, 2014.

Publications

Moretti, M. Europa Dreaming: Using Visual Journalism to Question the European Dream in Data Driven Journalism. June 2016.

Moretti, M., & Burgio, V. (2017). Infographics as Images: Meaningfulness beyond Information. MDPI.

Burgio, V., & Moretti, M. Le forme della narrazione nel web-based documentary: il caso Europa Dreaming.