

[Title](#) || Vedute di Porto Said. Presentation

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Vedute di Porto Said (1978)

Exterior in interior-interiors in exterior of Federico Tiezzi.

directed by Federico Tiezzi.

soundtrack by Sandro Lombardi.

with Marion D'Hamburg, Alga Fox, Luisa Saviori, Pierluigi Tazzi, Federico Tiezzi, Luca Vespa.

Debut Florence, Teatro Rondò di Bacco, 3 February 1978

Vedute di Porto Said. Presentation

by *Mauro Petruzzello*

On his way back from the Congo to Marseille, Arthur Rimbaud stopped at Port Said. At this time, he was suffering from a syphilis-related tumour. More than an explicit reference guiding the project *Vedute di Porto Said*, this hint to Rimbaud's story acts as an evanescent suggestion. I call it a "project" and not a "performance" because *Vedute di Porto Said* is a series of "studies for environment", a definition chosen by the company itself to speak of its own approach to "analytical-existential" theatre (this definition is Giuseppe Bartolucci's). Each of these studies is autonomous and interchangeable, and substitutes the strong visuality typical of Carrozzone's early to mid-1970s works with a tension towards a "zero degree" of language. The new aim of this "zero degree" is to eschew narrative content and concentrate on an analytical study of relations as they variate across theatre's different elements: body, space and time.

The project's début took place at the Teatro Rondò di Bacco in Florence (3rd-12th February 1978), but because of its intrinsic attention to the spatial, it changed significantly as it toured both Italy and Europe (travelling to Pistoia, Milan, Bergamo, Torre del Greco, Bremen and Berlin). In Milan (10th-15th April 1978, as part of the festival *Progetto 78*) and in Berlin (23rd-24th March at Kunstlerhaus Bethanien), Carrozzone's props changed too: a big clock, a fridge, a lamp, a fan, carpets, strip lights and a constant use of projection dominated the stage. In both versions a large ceiling lamp at an angle appeared to defy the laws of gravity, together with a carpet with one lifted corner. The two versions however differed in their approach to the use of time and space. In Milan, a man repeated a series of mechanical gestures seated on a chair that seemed to float mid-air; a projector showed images of landscapes, maps, nudists and geometrical drawings. Yellow, blue and white neon tubes punctuated the stage. Later, a naked man holding one of the neon tubes attempts to exit the perimeter of the stage, while voices are heard speaking English and French. The appearance of a woman engendered another movement and prop change. Two seated women, propped up by a large elastic band, reiterated a series of simple gestures. Then, more images: a dress trapping a figure, a performer trying to wriggle free from a spiderweb made of ropes, a woman sitting upright at the back of the stage, performers oscillating dangerously on swings over the audience. When, at the end, the spectators come out into the yard, they come across two women with their legs on a couch and their backs on the ground, an image accompanied by an offstage voiceover in English.

In Berlin, still with the oblique chandelier and the carpet with the raised flap, Federico Tiezzi tries several times to get up from a chair, but the action fails time and again and the performer tries again, reaching new portions of space at every attempt, eventually standing up. Later, a man that is initially seen sitting with his back to the audience has his movements hampered by a rope. Another scene is played on the idea of subverting perspective: Luisa Saviori is seen sitting with her back to the audience as Luca Vespa paces out the space; after a blackout the same scene is repeated, but this time on the back wall, where the performers are acting out the same scene the other way round. In Berlin too there was frequent recourse to projections of geometric cut slides, and a sound dramaturgy provided by the work of minimalist composers (Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Charlemagne Palestine).

Vedute di Porto Said acts as a bridge in the work of Carrozzone (not yet Magazzini Criminali: the company will change name in 1979 and become a broader working group, making performances, magazines and records). On the one hand, it maintains the characteristics of the "studies for environment" that denied the apparatus of spectacularity by tending towards the zero of theatrical language; on the other other, it shifts towards a new horizon that will lead the Tuscan group towards the form of the "show".