




# DECAMERON-19: Dispatches from the Isolated City

is a transnational collaboration from cities around the world, generating 100 stories in response to life during this global pandemic.



The project draws inspiration from the literature of plague, in particular Boccaccio's 'Decameron', in which ten characters, sheltering in an empty villa outside Florence, tell each other stories whilst in isolation from the Black Death of 1348. **DECAMERON-19**, by contrast, plays out in the digital present, physically and virtually, in our streets and public spaces, under open skies and in cyber-space.

A network of artists from cities across the globe, many of whom were initially strangers to each other, have been meeting weekly, virtually, to narrate stories lived, retold and performed through the project's methodology of exchanging scores.

Each contributor, in turn, writes and presents a score which then becomes a tool for exploring the edges of shared, and separate, space. The embodied and situated responses, reflect the common and the unique spatial, psychological, social and political conditions we find ourselves in.

By interpreting the same score in different contexts, Decameronistas have been mapping their localities, and exchanging their experience of making work in differing states of lockdown, restrictive policy measures and economic constraints. The emergent work, and the emergent collegueship and friendship, is sustaining the group. The weekly conversations connect these different perspectives, and map the present, exploring the role of art in finding resource


currently, and in imagined futures.

The result is the co-production of new knowledge about the nature of living through multidimensional crises.

The **DECAMERON-19** meetings have been full of laughter, and febrile, furtive, provocative exchange, leavened with a sense of underlying pathos at the state we find ourselves in, and the precarity of individuals situations at different times and places. Like Boccaccio's novel, the emerging work provides a document of sorts of life at this time. His was written in the vernacular of the Florentine language, this account is written in the individual poetic visions, ritual inventions, weird fictions, unexpected narratives and humorous political critiques of makers, artists, musicians and others, employing their creativity in these transdisciplinary conversations.

Welcome to our interim presentation! We have, to date, collectively produced over 50 responses to 10 scores. Reviving a culture of solidarity, the individual responses combine here in a new composition, collapsing time to select some key discussion, elements and epiphanies.

As we now enter a new a phase of pandemic, and ever stricter measures to curb the rapid spread of an invisible contagion, we don't see an obvious end to **DECAMERON-19**. Reaching 100 stories is our next milestone...



**Expanding network:** Anja Dimitrijevic; Laura Santini; Mathieu Tremblin, Cynthia Montier; Peter McCaughey; Sharmila Samant; Igor Ponosov; Zara Joan Miller; @xcrswx (Crystabel Riley & Seymour Wright); Robert Luzar; Deana Kolenčíková; Thomas Lasbouygues; Ben Parry; Lia Mazzari; Epos 257; Encastrable; Jonathan Naas; Arzhel Prioul; Marianne Villière; Aïda Gomez; Vladimír Turner; Billy Steiger

**Concept and curation:** Lia Mazzari & Ben Parry




# THE SCORES OF DECAMERON-19



## Proem

Beginneth here the Decameron-19, otherwise Dispatches from the Isolated City, wherein is publicly debated, that which felt most relevant unto each participant during lockdown and that which would feel important in the world to come, since the Rise of Virus known as Covid-19. In the course of Ten Weeks, one after another, each participant doneth the mantle of Queen or King to set the Score, and inviteth each one to perform a Story in the City.



Beginneth here **Week the First** of the Decameron-19, wherein are publicly debated, under the governance of Lia Mazzari and Ben Parry, the tools for Occupation and Assembly in times of social distancing.

Beginneth here **Week the Second** of the Decameron-19, wherein are publicly debated, under the governance of Peter McCaughey, three sites of remembering, three ways of connecting, three levels of engaging or a fourth option.

Beginneth here **Week the Third** of the Decameron-19, wherein are publicly debated, under the governance of Julia Welchman, skyscapes and escaping flights.

Beginneth here **Week the Fourth** of the Decameron-19, wherein are publicly debated, under the governance of Anja Dimitrijevic & Laura Santini, unexpected happy endings.

Beginneth here **Week the Fifth** of the Decameron-19, wherein is publicly debated, under the governance of Cynthia Montier & Mathieu Tremblin, the unveiling of what is hidden—a force in your surroundings; thereby unmasking the truth.

Beginneth here **Week the Sixth** of the Decameron-19, wherein is publicly debated, under the governance of @xcrswx, a walk around the street looking like a trumpet, irrespective of whether or not you are found out.

Beginneth here **Week the Seventh** of the Decameron-19, wherein is publicly debated, under the governance of Robert Luzar, the making of sufficient supplies.

Beginneth here **Week the Eighth** of the Decameron-19, wherein is publicly debated, under the governance of Igor Ponosov, an analysis of the city as a site for Martial Law.

Beginneth here **Week the Ninth** of the Decameron-19, wherein are publicly debated, under the governance of Sharmila Samant, companions for a matinee somnambulist.

Beginneth here **Week the Tenth** of the Decameron-19, wherein is publicly debated, under the governance of Zara Joan Miller, whether to place oneself at the periphery, or the vortex, of a spiral.

