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MARIA LAI I LUOGHI DELL'ARTE

QUATTRO MAZZI DI CARTE PER ARGOMENTARE SUL FARE ARTE, LEGGERE L'ARTE, RIDEFINIRE L'ARTE

This little box contains the four packs of cards for **I luoghi dell'arte a portata di mano**, which Maria Lai (Ulassai 1919 - Cardedu 2013) created in the early years of the century as a way of developing the confidence to have a personal response to "works of art" in both children and adults. This new edition, edited by Archivio Maria Lai and co-published with the Maria Lai Foundation (www.fondazionemarialai.it) is based on a set of cards Maria continued to work on during her last years.

There are four packs of cards, packed with symbolic significance associated with tangible specificity and constructiveness: **Luoghi simbolici**, **Luoghi comuni**, **Luoghi relativi** and **Luoghi paralleli**. Taking their cue from the key words – speaking, asking, reading and interpreting – they lie at the heart of a wholly absorbing game in which the reader/player is encouraged to break free of reality and learn to use his eyes to truly "see".

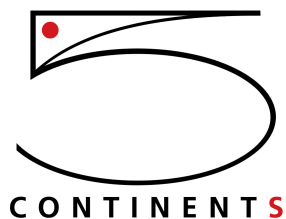
The **places** the artist had in mind are places where people meet and interact through art, a medium that the expression **at your fingertips** makes available through an invitation to play. The book that comes with the cards, written by Giuseppina Cuccu and with a contribution by Valentina De Pasca, illustrates and provides a gloss on every card and each pack, thus helping the reader find answers to the artist's implicit questions. However, the lack of any set rules or instructions makes it clear that these cards are meant to leave the player entirely free to make his own interpretations. As an artwork in their own right, **I luoghi dell'arte a portata di mano** operate on two levels: on the one hand they convey theories on the formal, compositional and functional role of art and on the other they act as a means of exploring art that is available to anyone. The artist's goal was to do away with all restrictions and get as many people as possible interested in art, convinced as she was that art is able to change the world by expanding people's consciousness to encompass a more human and more inclusive dimension.

"Playing" with the **I luoghi dell'arte a portata di mano** cards develops an awareness of the creative process and of the relationship between experience and behaviour. Art is not derived from instinct, superficiality and improvisation, but is something that can be achieved by deliberate, personal inner scrutiny, performed with the specific purpose of building and reinforcing our consciousness.

This is why this work of Maria Lai's is often used by art workshops, exhibitions, training courses, art schools and free experiments, with both adults and children. It is an inexhaustible source of discussions generating endlessly fascinating questions and answers in equal measure.

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Giuseppina Cuccu is a teacher and has been involved in the field of communication in a broad sense for almost forty years. She has studied anthropology and popular traditions, as well as being



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[actively involved in the theatre and the visual arts, subjects about which she has written and spoken in conferences. She has an expert knowledge of the work of Maria Lai, with whom she collaborated from the early 1980s until the artist's death in 2013. During these years a working relationship developed into a firm friendship and the two met frequently to discuss things of mutual interest, especially the subject of artistic education. A few of these conversations from the period between 1992 and 2001 are gathered in **Le ragioni dell'arte** \(2002\).](#)

[**Valentina De Pasca** is an art historian and works in publishing. She obtained her PhD in Archaeology and the History of Early Medieval Art from the University of Milan, with a thesis on disc fibulas, artefacts that testify to the cultural contacts that existed between sixth to eighth-century Longobard Italy and the eastern Mediterranean. Her work in the field of book publishing gives her the opportunity to develop an expertise in the design, sale and promotion of books, as well as offering the chance to develop her own projects on art and literature as an author in her own right. Her first illustrated book, entitled **Pomodori da scartare** \(Edizioni del Gruppo Abele\), was published in 2019.](#)