Fig.124 Picture showing my Dutch neighbors' daughter exploring an installation I made by sticking collages printed on adhesive on 60 by 60 centimeters ceramic tiles. In this installation it was also interesting to see how the actual RGB light depicting the weather I experienced interacted with the tiles. Also at the end of this corridor of trash there is the monitor displaying all the videos of public places I have shot. Since these videos are centered on the vanishing point of places, the corridor of trash almost continues inside it, or at least this is the original intention which made me think of a memory theater with which I have got to come up with all of the components of reality I wanted to depict as part of my life-project.

TRASH 04

In later years I settled in the Netherlands regularly traveling across Europe to visit my son in Sweden or to build my ark in Italy. During these trips I did manage to explore random French or German towns I have crossed on my way to these destinations but generally speaking most of the trash picking was done in the Netherlands. While most of the trash I have picked has Dutch text written on it, I have noticed that pretty much all the fliers and cigarette boxes and generally the advertisements picked from the sidewalk of the Western world started looking increasingly the same. This has occurred throughout the course of the project, at a time in which multinational companies like McDonald, Marlboro, H&M, IKEA contributed to the gentrification of the Western urban environments and beyond. In some respects then what I have also documented in the course of this systematic trash picking work is

the gradual disappearance of local and even national brands. Everything became more global; the KFC fast-food packaging I can pick in Rotterdam is similar if not the same from the KFC packaging I can pick in Shanghai.

The Netherlands to me has always been a highly receptive country, the perfect environment where to analyze and even manipulate consumer trends. With almost no wilderness left and in part constructed by subtracting land from the sea, the Netherlands to me are like a woman with open arms, a harbor that gets quickly contaminated by mainstream fashion. If somewhere, someone decides one ought to wear a particular jacket with a particular backpack and even with a particular water bottle, everyone follows with very little exception what the mainstream dictates. Even in situations when a certain level of originality should be shown such as in art academies or during carnivals everyone seems highly normalized, homologated, standardized. It is the modern state par excellence and in all my travels and adventures I ultimately ended up being caught within it. In no time I realize that not only what is in fashion highly characterizes the way one looks but also the way one ought to think. This is of course a characteristic of the highly gentrified cities but even in little villages that are practically the satellites of a city the same sort of mainstreamnes can be detected.

Unwilling to be part of such a mainstream and really feeling quite nauseated about it the whole of my creative output has been reduced to that of accounting on it, picking trash, creating a sort of human consciousness that breaks through the sort of narrowness in which a whole society can be pushed in by a highly efficient corporate/state machine. I am not talking here about being or not being original and living an authentic life beyond all the norms. I am talking here about being mindful, escaping the megarituals of these machines that inevitably turn its subjects numbed. Now if all these subjects were happy deer grazing the green pastures I would not so much worry about them, I would let them be as I let be the creatures of the wild. The issue is that what I perceive is a general state of tremendous anxiety and depression affecting this highly efficient bureaucratic apparatus. Yet there is nothing that emerges from the way people look or contain themselves but having had the opportunity to live right within this and other stainless nation-states I conceive a kind of general psychosis.

Thanks to my project I am able to keep my own autonomy and not let myself be sucked in by the mental instability of the subjects of these highly stable states but I can only come to the conclusion that the more efficient a centralized bureaucracy is, the more derailed its subjects are. If people are then drawn to think of progress, they are only drawn to think of progress in terms of the machinery that is being developed to support and augment the corporate/state machine. In reality the more advanced the technologies are the more I start to feel humans lose their mindfulness and collapse. So if it is not the system to collapse it is in the first place its people and I think my on-going ethnographic work is really much showing this. Actually I would call my practice not so much an ethnography, or an autoethnography or anthropology but generally speaking a counter-ethnography. I do not go to distant destination to study primitive societies in remote islands but I keep in the midst of the highly civilized humans, not operating from their institutions but from m primitive setting, a s a primitive with his mindfulness looking and observing in a rudimentary fashion at a civilization growing increasingly sophisticated and in many ways losing it.

I see generations being thrown in the front line of an unnecessary war, being sent next to the appealing but devastating center of power, the sparkling engine generating wealth but with it also much of the many issues devastating not only people but the environment. And these folk sent to the front line are not to return and they are not either way going to be capable of regenerating themselves. They are basically only human sacrifice without acknowledging it. They are sacrifices as sacrifices were the people decapitated on top of the Aztec pyramids. We climb our careers as we climb these pyramids only to get our head chopped. We think we are being covered with gold but it is in fact the pyramid of power to be covered with our blood. We think of stepping over others but in fact we step over our own humanity and nature at large. Perhaps the Netherlands as such is not a pyramid in itself but only the tip of a pyramid with poorer nations in the old Europe making up the base it is always the case when many realities get merged under one bureaucracy; no matter all the good initial purposes an hegemony is formed and I think my project in a way depicts right that, the formation of Europe and the more Germanic countries within coming to form the hegemony, the top of such a pyramid with not only the terrible consequences this have on the more Latin or Slavic populations

but also the terrible consequences this have on the very Germanic population administrating but in turn also getting consumed by power.

Now coming back to my trash project this is a very obvious fact, if prior to the beginning of the project Europe was still divided and there was a strong hegemony within the nations states themselves making for example Northern Italian companies very powerful and dominant, with the unification of Europe all these companies were replaced by Nordic companies who took the hegemony over furniture making and clothes making but als in the more intellectual and cultural realm. Europe under a centralized bureaucracy, no matter the effort to have it represented by all its countries, ended up constituting a very unfair economy creating these regions of specialization with countries like Italy by now only becoming countries for leisure and food production. By removing all form of centralization, continental and national I believe communities could breathe again and so also individuals and artists who could create authentic work beyond the mainstream and bring life to their communities, bring them the diversity that is needed for them to get prolific once more and not at the miserable dependence of the capital of power.