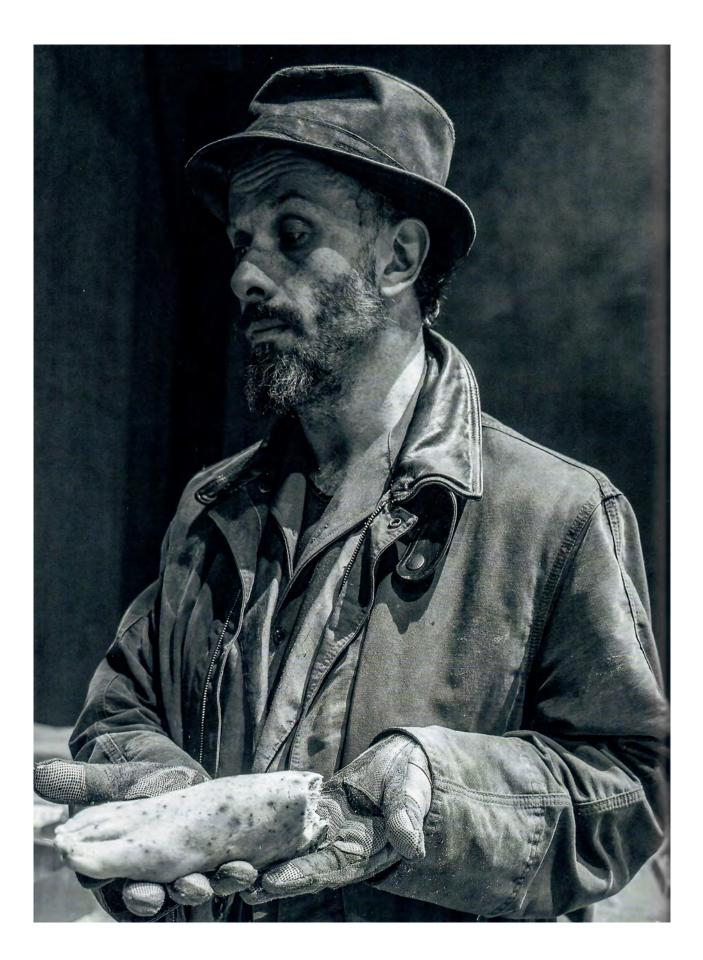
Roberto Cuoghi

REVUE DE PRESSE | SELECTED PRESS





The Extremist

Roberto Cuoghi knows no bounds. His gigantic Jesus factory at the Venice Biennale is a lugubrious laboratory, the artist a researcher obsessed with bringing new things into the world.

by Silke Hohmann

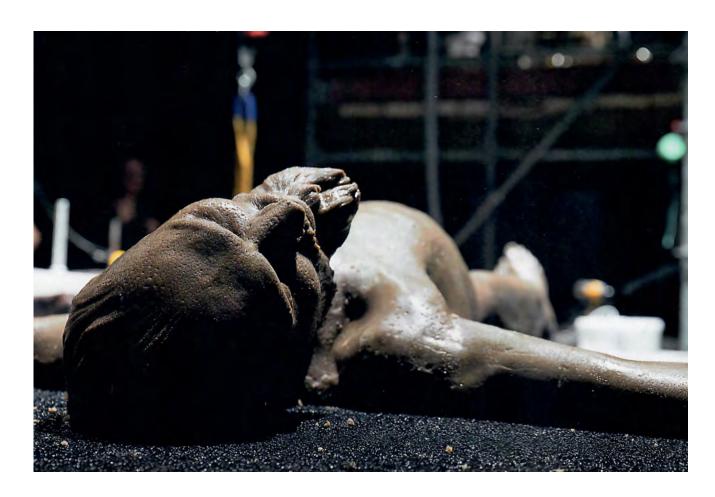
oberto Cuoghi walks into the Italian Pavilion wearing a jacket far too big for him, the jacket of an overweight man, which is briefly a shock. For if we know anything about the artist, it's the fact that he himself was once this fat old man.

At the age of 24 he began more than doubling his body weight and took to wearing his father's clothes, dyeing his hair gray and leading the life of a prosperous senior citizen. It was said he wanted to transmogrify into his own father. What is most disturbing about the story is that Roberto Cuoghi refuses to acknowledge this transformation as his work of art or even to talk about it as an artist. The fat old man he once was is now the proverbial elephant in the room. In a mustard yellow jacket.

Roberto Cuoghi is an extreme case. Instead of setting his sights on steadily developing his artistic career, he throws himself headlong into one individual series after another that have nothing to do with one another. As soon as a series is completed, he moves on to utterly new terrain, beginning again from scratch, immersing himself in research, developing brand new techniques. That may involve anything from ancient Assyrian divinities and musical instruments to novel sculptural methods using fire and putrefaction. Cuoghi keeps experimenting anew every time to the point of

burnout, till he comes up with something he's actually surprised at himself.

A while ago he began researching the historical Jesus. Contrary to his expectations, the more he read, the less clear this character became. So he decided to approach his subject from another angle: he serially produced Jesus and subjected him to various orga-nic processes in order to obtain as many variants as possible. The Imitation of Christ is an absurdly elaborate experimental setup that began with a mold for the sculpture of a tall slim average-looking bearded man. He filled it with agar-agar, a gelatin extracted from algae, and laid the finished sculptures out in state in various iglooshaped tents with different climate zones. It wasn't long before mold and bacteria got to work on them Venice is a pa-radise for spores. Within a week, a long thin coating grew on the surfaces, not only in the usual shades of gray, but eccentric colors like pink and orange. At some point the bodies burst open, deep cracks appeared, fingers and limbs were deformed. The special effects of zombie movies set in naturally, and each individual figure began to show increasingly distinctive traits. When the development had reached an ideal stage, Cuoghi stopped it with a special technique he has developed: by placing the figures in a freeze-dryer, the reverse of a kiln but with similar effect. This, Cuoghi says, is a way of producing new sculptures.





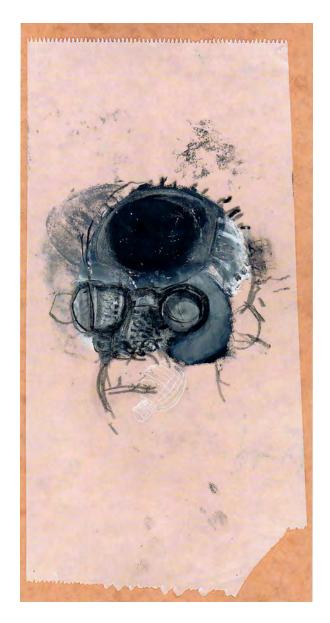
"This here looks friendly." He is pointing at a dark head with sunken cheeks. "He's almost smiling. And this one could be from South America." At the Biennale opening in May, a handful of body fragments were hung on the front side of the pavilion, like finds from an archeological dig. Over the course of a few months, the wall came to be covered with an assemblage of deformed torsos, crooked hands and heads in various shades and stages of composting. He and his team, says the artist, are very happy with the results.

With all that concentration on the biological processes, does he still see how dark and spooky the whole thing is? "Yes, I see it." But he doesn't show the most gruesome stuff, he points out. "And I can't help it if the pivotal figure in our culture happens to be a sorrowful haggard man on a cross." Is he criticizing religion? His bankroller and principal patron, Prada, deliberately kept the brand name out of it because there was no telling how the public would react to Cuoghi's idea of finally letting Jesus die. It seems a reasonable inference that, with the story of the historical Jesus, Cuoghi has merely taken on another complicated father-son relationship: the New Testament as the most popular tale of daddy issues, and serial Jesus as merchandising.

But Cuoghi doesn't seem like someone who has a message for the world. He's interested in very different things. He chose Jesus "because it's a good story and part of our identity".

A vehicle for addressing sculptural issues, the art history prototype par excellence. More important to him than the religious aspect is the magic that takes place in the lab, the physical transformation, the work of fungi and minus temperatures on the Christ figure.

Cuoghi's art is also so strange and fringe because it is not defined by a certain aesthetic or a nameable theme. At the outside, by its denial of the assertion of any one authoritative reality. Cuoghi always shows what else might be. How unlikely it is that we really see or think the same things much as we strive to create and communicate meaning. Cuoghi's work doesn't look like the work of a single artist, nor does it look like the work of any other artist.





Cuoghi's art is neither defined by a certain aesthetic nor by any Subject. It just denies the existence of a binding Reality

His overarching theme is the impossibility of truth. "This linear narrative, that one can go from the unknown to the truth, is an illusion. And yet it dominates religion as well as science to this day." Everything is based on the three pillars of guilt, knowledge and salvation—in Christianity as in science. Maybe that's why he feels it's his job to sow the greatest possible confusion.



MONOPOL



While still a student, Cuoghi donned prism eyeglasses that reverse top and bottom as well as right and left: the maximum possible inversion of the world. He would show up at art school in the trappings of a kamikaze pilot and make drawings and self-portraits. He endured this reversal of vision, a state so fundamentally unsettling that most people can only take it for a few minutes, for five days. Cuoghi once spent two days writing a text without any meaning, which is no mean feat, he says. Then he gave it to a translator, the translation was then translated into another language, and then another, and so on and so forth. Some of the languages hardly exist in written form, and each was to be as linguistically far apart as possible from the previous one. The most striking thing about it was how the participants, who knew nothing about the experimen-

even a moral. Mistakes, misunderstandings, failure are all on Roberto Cuoghi's side. He turns them into accomplices, just as he did with the bacteria and fungi at the Arsenale in Venice. What interests him is where they deploy and give rise to new unplannable forms. "Anything I can imagine myself is too boring for me," explains the artist. "My imagination is the problem!" He wishes he could transcend it. But that only works with certain drugs: plunging into a realm that has no connection to reality, that lies outside all past experience. Art, he says, has to be as though one were to edit

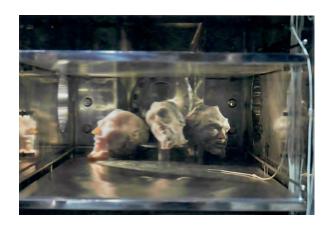
tal nature of the project, tried to come up with meaning,

Ridley Scott's Alien into the first outer space movie, The War of the Worlds, and show it to a 1950s audience. "That would be my dream of an artwork: to create something that does not stem from my own imagination and has nothing to do with the world we know."

The work of the bacteria on the agar-agar Jesuses is a first step in this direction, he says, for nature is also way ahead of man in the creation of irregularities and errors. Once, when he made portraits of friends in the art world and added awful mutilations and flesh wounds, broke their noses and buried them, he soon came up against his limitations. "They were still too beautiful. Imitation always falls flat. Even the most elaborate explosion in a movie doesn't shake you up the way hearing a real accident does."

He has to push everything to the limit—including the role of the artist. Cuoghi, the artist bent on transcending imagination. And who disavows his most brilliant work. Does he have a problem with being an artist? Why the denials? Cuoghi instinctively takes his hands off the table. Then he starts talking: His fingernails, which he once let grow for nearly a year back in his student days, are simply tools he works with. To call that performance art would be dead wrong, as though he were copying something himself. "That would be too '70s for me!"

He didn't realize he was an artist till he was already making a living at it. One motive was certainly to get a taxpayer number without having to sign up for a nine-to-five day job. But maybe, he reflects, he couldn't have been anything but an artist. Not even in the army. In those days it was impossible for him to even go shopping without offending someone or being judged himself. Or sitting down next to someone on a park bench. That was one reason to radically change his look and habits one day: to morph from a thin punk to a corpulent 60-year-old. In a single summer he put on 20 kilos, after several years he weighed in at 140 kg. He suffered permanent damage to his health, but was also accorded the obliging treatment shown to elderly gentlemen. "It wasn't about being accepted. It was about no longer giving people the impression I was dissatisfied and unhappy."





MONOPOL

Some people who'd known him earlier broke out in tears when they saw him again. He stopping doing art, became a night watchman at a construction site and cut his social ties—not only in the art scene, which of course was dying for nothing as much as the story of his metamorphosis. In 2002, when he was invited to the Manifesta in Frankfurt am Main and came to view the premises, the curators immediately told him they wanted to exhibit a work about his physical transformation. "It is not an artwork," insisted Cuoghi, who was still living the role at the time. There's no documentation, he pointed

Roberto Cuoghi had succeeded in being two different people at the same time, superimposing realities, fast-forwarding and folding time.

out, much to their consternation and dismay. So he asked them to write down what interested them about it. The curators wrote something about freezing time, about a certain melancholy and their fascination with his utterly unfashionable look. Cuoghi tried to meet

LINKS

"P(XXVIA)mm",
2012

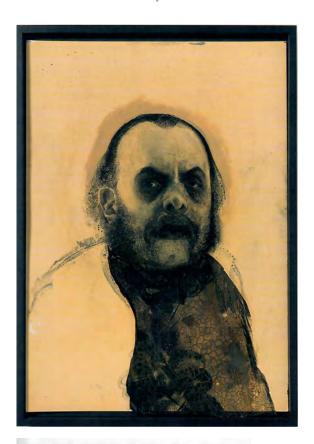
DEFINITION

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their demands and produced a video with an endless sunset and a karaoke song about a non-existent man. The video ran for a year in the exhibit, then he pulled the plug.

Roberto Cuoghi had succeeded in being two different people at the same time, in superimposing realities, fast-forwarding and folding time. He still seems both old and young. Though mostly young, brimming with impatience and curiosity, a yen for excess and intensity that makes him carry on. What's next? "A show with Luc Tuymans in Antwerp. It's about Barack." Is he already working on it? Cuoghi gazes off into the distance glumly for a moment, apparently it's tough going. But he's got the argument down: "I want to prove that the earth is flat." When I laugh in surprise, he responds with a cordial chuckle—the kind polite persons use when no joke was intended. We shake hands goodbye. His fingernails are straight, filed, and very, very long.

Translated from the German by Eric Rosencrantz



Roberto Cuoghis "The Imitation of Christ" ist noch bis 26. November im italienischen Pavillon in Venedig zu sehen. Die Monografie "Perla Polina" ist bei Hatje Cantz erschlenen (auf Englisch, 492 Seiten, 58 Euro)

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NÉ EN 1973 À MODÈNE ET BASÉ AUJOURD'HUI À MILAN, ROBERTO CUOGHI RÉALISE DES ŒUVRES HYBRIDES, MUTANTES, QUI TROUBLENT LA PERCEPTION DES REPRÉSENTATIONS. TOUT AU LONG DE L'ANNÉE 2017, IL FAIT L'OBJET D'UNE EXPOSITION ITINÉRANTE EN EUROPE POUR LAQUELLE LA COLLECTION PINAULT A PRÊTÉ L'ŒUVRE SENZA TITOLO.

THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER, ROBERTO CUOGHI
(BORN IN MODENA, ITALY, IN 1973; CURRENTLY
LIVING AND WORKING IN MILAN) HAS CREATED
HYBRID THEATRICAL WORKS IN A VARIETY OF
MEDIA THAT RADICALLY ALTER OUR PERCEPTION
OF REPRESENTATION. AN EXHIBITION OF
CUOGHI'S WORK WILL TRAVEL TO VARIOUS
EUROPEAN MUSEUMS OVER THE YEAR 2017; THE
PINAULT COLLECTION IS CONTRIBUTING THE WORK
SENZA TITOLO.

CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE GENÈVE MUSEO MADRE, NAPLES KUNSTVEREIN, COLOGNE

ROBERTO

CUOGHI

Roberto CUOGHI Senza titolo, 2005-2007

Techniques diverses, 9 éléments /
Unitled (Myanmar), 2007, 83 × 43 cm
Unitled (Belarus), 2006, 53 × 53 cm
Unitled (Syria), 2007, 53 × 53 cm
Unitled (North Korea), 2005, 53 × 53 cm
Unitled (Sudan), 2007, 63 × 53 cm
Unitled (Turkmenistan), 2007, 28 × 28 cm
Unitled (Cuba), 2007, 53 × 53 cm
Unitled (Iran), 2007, 53 × 53 cm
Unitled (Libaa), 2007, 53 × 53 cm
Unitled (Libaa), 2007, 53 × 53 cm

Mixed media, 9 pieces

Texte
Franck Gautherot
Co-directeur du / co-director of
Le Consortium, Dijon

Le mapping permet l'adaptation de deux niveaux d'informations. La création de cartes perceptuelles va nous aider à mettre en regard des géographies infectées. L'attribution de labels infamants (l'axe du Mal) à des territoires de notre monde n'est pas sans évoquer les zones « sinistres » à la gauche de l'Empire chez les Romains. Les pays du Mal ne sont pas des zones de consommation balnéaires mais éventuellement d'investigations d'agents de contrôle de l'ONU—un peu ces inspecteurs du travail qui viennent vérifier que vos gaillards ont bien leurs chaussures à bouts blindés pour manœuvrer ces lourdes caisses serrant les précieux tableaux entre des jolies mousses colorées.

Roberto Cuoghi est un artiste de la réinvention, du trompe-l'œil, de la recréation et de l'imagination. Celui qui a décidé de devenir son géniteur, qui a décidé d'en adopter la carrure et les goûts culturels, celui qui a décidé d'être l'ordonnateur de musiques de temples à la toute fin du temps assyrien et d'en assumer la

When studying maps, we are able to grasp En multiple different layers of information simultaneously; perceptual maps in particular help us to analyze and compare infected geographies. Today, the attribution of labels such as "Axis of Evil" evokes the 'sinister' zones to the east of the Roman Empire ('sinister,' from the Latin meaning 'on the left side' - quite literally here—'unlucky, inauspicious'). The countries of the "Axis of Evil" are not cheerful seaside resorts; on the contrary, these places are regularly inspected by agents of the United Nations - somewhat akin to those workplace inspectors patrolling construction sites, making sure that the crew working there is wearing the appropriate footwear, shoes with steel-enforced toes, when maneuvering the heavy crates containing precious works protected by soft and pretty foam.

Roberto Cuoghi is an artist of reinvention, of trompel'oeil, of entertainment and imagination: an artist who chose to transform himself into his father as part of an







REVIEWS

Roberto Cuoghi "PERLA POLLINA, 1996-2016" at MADRE, Naples

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by Agnieszka Gratza

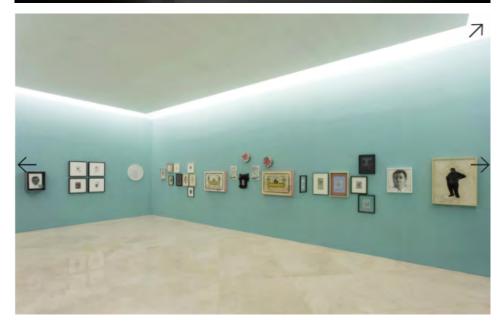
The accidental title of Roberto Cuoghi's midcareer retrospective, which the press release attributes to "the erroneous effects of an auto-correct program," invites various possible readings. A reclusive and enigmatic figure who has been known to shun the art establishment, the Italian artist cultivates a hermit-like persona. The titular "pollina," suggestive of chicken manure, put this critic in mind of Aesop's fable about a rooster who finds a jewel in a dung heap only to cast it aside, since in his eyes the gem is no substitute for plain corn. It has certain affinities with the playful name Cuoghi adopted in one of his earliest self-portrait series, Il Coccodeista (1997), a made-up word that conjures the cackle of a hen. In an interview quoted by the show's curator, Andrea Bellini, in the opening essay of the lavishly illustrated monograph accompanying PERLA POLLINA, Cuoghi suggests that "pearls are an illness of the seashell." Not unlike the tumor-generating cancer—a diseased outgrowth and error in the order of nature—pearls are excessive in every way, and yet we set great store by them.



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It would be fitting, for an amateur of the fugue such as Cuoghi, that his retrospective should take the form of three iterations of growing complexity. Whether this will happen remains to be seen. Of the three exhibitions, all curated by Bellini—starting with his home institution, the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, and traveling to MADRE, Naples, and then on to Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, over the course of a year—only two have taken place to date.

If these are anything to go by, there is a conscious effort on the curator's part to vary the presentation of the selected works that goes beyond the constraints created by the exhibition spaces. By and large the same individual works and bodies of work, showing Cuoghi's artistic evolution in the last two decades, feature in both shows, from the early self-portraits for which the artist subjected himself to all manner of grueling (and much-discussed) experiments to the ceramic crabs in the 2016
Putiferio series and the kilns in which they were fired. If anything, the inaugural show at the Centre d'Art Contemporain is the more complete of the two when it comes to the number of works on display. Moreover, the sound installations documenting
Mbube (2005), Mei Gui (2006), and Šuillakku (2008) (which, admittedly, were not the most successful part of the Geneva show, as the headphone presentation failed to do justice to the complexity of these choral works) are not shown at MADRE. Instead, a seminar focusing on this aspect of Cuoghi's oeuvre will take place during the exhibition.



Cuoghi tends to work in cycles and series, obsessively exploring a given technique or method that requires him to master a set of skills, until his interest is exhausted and he moves on to the next thing. Works belonging to each series were grouped together in Geneva in a roughly chronological fashion on the third floor (where most of the drawings, diary works, maps, and some of sculptural pieces were displayed,) resulting in a more coherent show. Those same works were deliberately mixed and matched on the corresponding (second) floor at MADRE, in a way that brought to light possible connections between discrete cycles and suggested new readings of individual works.

Take for instance *Megas Dakis* (2007), an astonishingly lifelike profile portrait of the Greek collector Dakis Joannou in the guise of a Roman emperor minted on a coin. The fleshy wax effigy, complete with human hair, morphs in places into strange hybrid creatures—doll and animal rolled into one. Unlike at the Centre d'Art Contemporain, where this was the centerpiece and focal point in a dedicated room, at MADRE the work was hung behind one of the Pazuzu sculptures, named after the demon of wind in Sumerian mythology, whose face in this instance bore Cuoghi's likeness; rather than Joannou's portrait, it took center stage. In Geneva, the work was shown alongside prints and wonderfully absurd reproductions of deep-fried surgical instruments that form part of Joannou's collection; the fourteen works in question appeared mounted onto the wall in single file, spanning three communicating galleries in Naples, but taken out of context their overall impact felt somewhat diminished.

In lieu of the shrine to Joannou as a patron and collector, toward which the different rooms on the third floor of the Centre d'Art Contemporain built up, the eight smaller gallery spaces at MADRE strikingly featured a collector's room. Minimally furnished with dark-wood period furniture, which served to display some of the artworks, it brought together a range of ceramic crabs, a layered map of the world, and prints of surgical instruments, hung salon style, beside the dark painted portrait of yet another maimed art aficionado, staring back at the viewer with his one intact eye. Staged in this way, familiar works by Cuoghi took on the aura of wonders produced by nature and art alike—the sorts of objects one would expect to find and marvel at in an eighteenth-century gentleman's *Wunderkammer*, which incidentally is what Cuoghi's own studio is like.

Galerie Chantal Crousel

Mousse Magazine



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Roberto Cuoghi, *Imitazione di Cristo*,, 2017, "Il Mondo Magico" Italia Pavilion at Venice Biennale, 2017 Photo: Marco De Scalzi

CONVERSATIONS

"Il Mondo Magico" at Italian Pavilion, Venice Biennale

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Cecilia Alemani interviewed by Wendy Vogel



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Roberto Cuoghi, *Imitazione di Cristo*,, 2017, "Il Mondo Magico" Italia Pavilion at Venice Biennale, 2017 Photo: Marco De Scalzi

Wendy Vogel: This year's Italian Pavilion exhibition at the Venice Biennale is *II mondo magico*, a title borrowed from the 1948 book by Ernesto de Martino. Your curatorial statement refers to de Martino's description of rituals as "devices through which individuals try to regain control in times of uncertainty and reassert their presence in the world." Can you explain how this theme resonates in our political climate?

Cecilia Alemani: Il mondo magico is the book that inaugurates de Martino's studies about the world of magic. He looks at ancient civilizations and their rituals, shamanic practices, mythologies, beliefs. After II mondo magico, he keeps studying the theme of magic in the "Southern trilogy," which was published in the 1950s and 1960s. In these books, he examines Italy in a specific time culturally—the Second World War, when there was a sharp distinction between the north and the south. The north is associated with the economic boom and industry, while the south has been seen as the poor and the peasant region. De Martino goes on missions to study the magic world of these southern populations. He looked to magic as a tool to reaffirm one's presence in the world, and not as an escape into an irrational world. I am struck by his role in giving voice to the populations of southern Italy, which at that moment were seen as a second-class culture. I use this idea to frame the exhibition called II mondo magico, which includes three artists whose work is embedded in research into rituals, as well as belief and faith in imagination. They use new mythologies as tools to rewrite history and to face a moment of crisis.

WV: Your curatorial text states that the exhibiting artists move away from documentary-style narratives. Do their methods resonate with the way de Martino worked?



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Roberto Cuoghi, *Imitazione di Cristo,*, 2017, "Il Mondo Magico" Italia Pavilion at Venice Biennale, 2017 Photo: Marco De Scalzi

CA: Yes, because de Martino's approach was quite experimental. He was using the methodology of anthropology, but instead of applying it to all cultures, he applied it to his own contemporary culture. His research was also incredibly interdisciplinary. He would travel with photographers like Franco Pinna, who would document rituals like tarantism. He also brought an ethnomusicologist to record the southern population's voices, songs, and lamentations. Today, you could call his approach documentary, but it wasn't about recording from a passive standpoint.

WV: Why do you think the anti-documentary method is important now?

CA: I'm interested in facing themes and subjects that are still relevant today, but from a different entry point. You might say it is also a reaction to the last Biennale, curated by Okwui Enwezor, which was so much about straightforward documentary. I have great respect for Enwezor. One of the most amazing exhibitions, which brought me to what I do as a job, was his documenta in 2002. But that said, I like the idea of working with artists who can deal with the same themes, but from a more personal or alternative perspective. One clear example is Adelita Husni-Bey, who is the youngest artist in the exhibition. She works mainly with video. Husni-Bey tackles important subjects like the geopolitical crisis, but through the lens of imagination and utopia. She brings together groups of people in intense workshops where they try to create a new cosmology or a new vision of the world.

Cecilia Alemani interviewed by Wendy Vogel. «"Il Mondo Magico" at Italian Pavilion, Venice Biennale », MOUSSE Magazine, May 13, 2017.

http://moussemagazine.it/il-mondo-magico-italian-pavilion-at-venice-biennale-2017/2012.

Mousse Magazine

WV: Why did you choose to work with only three artists?

CA: The decision to have only three artists is a radical departure from the previous Italian Pavilion exhibitions, which have included up to 150 artists. I wanted to distance myself from that approach and align the pavilion more with the other national pavilions, which usually bring only one artist. The exhibition will present a deep reading of these three artists' work. They only show new work apiece, but each of them has a giant space. I hope that when you enter the pavilion, you feel as though you have walked into the artists' minds. Roberto Cuoghi is presenting a large sculptural installation. Adelita Husni-Bey has done a new video that she shot in New York. And Giorgio Andreotta Calò made an installation that is in deep dialogue with the pavilion's architecture.

WV: You write about the genealogy of a magic line in Italian art, from the Renaissance to the mysticism of Arte Povera to Transavanguardia and beyond. How do these artists fit within that tradition?

CA: Even though the artists are young, their language is deeply influenced by the Italian tradition. I write about a magic line that can be seen in the Renaissance, with a polarity between rational mathematical studies and the discovery of alchemy and Hermeticism. And more recently, in Arte Povera, it can be seen in artists' use of alchemic materials. For instance, Andreotta Calò often adopts strategies that can be compared to those of Arte Povera by using environmental elements like water, fire, and light. His use of water as both a generative and a destructive force recalls not only Arte Povera, but also artists like Gordon Matta-Clark and Robert Smithson. In Cuoghi's work, you can also easily see this magic line. I thought about the artist as a shaman, and Cuoghi is a perfect example of that. Recently, at the Deste Foundation in Greece, he made a series of amazing crab sculptures. They look artisanal, but they are actually made with a 3D printer that prints clay. Then he fired the clay in archaic-looking kilns that he built himself. He combined a very advanced technology with an ancient one.

at Venice Biennale until 26 November 2017



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REVIEW - 04 MAY 2017

Roberto Cuoghi

Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva

BY BARBARA CASAVECCHIA

Roberto Cuoghi's mid-career retrospective 'Perla Pollina 1996-2016' is a tour de force in the unconventional processing of media: glass, marble, resin, wood, chewing gum, clay, ashes, foodstuffs, glazed ceramic and bacteria all make an appearance. The title of the exhibition – curated by Andrea Bellini and travelling to MADRE, Naples, and Kölnischer Kunstverein, Colagne – was supposedly generated by chance 'due to the erroneous effects of an auto-correct program'. But both Italian words in the title are translatable as 'pearl' and 'organic fertilizer from poultry manure', evoking tricks of nature and transformation. For the occasion the Milan-based artist, who has a dark sense of humour and a penchant for the grotesque, even sadistically re-titled all his works. Now each piece is identified by a sequence of letters and roman numbers (for example, D+P (VIIIAc)mm/a), and the exhibition checklist reads as a lab inventory.



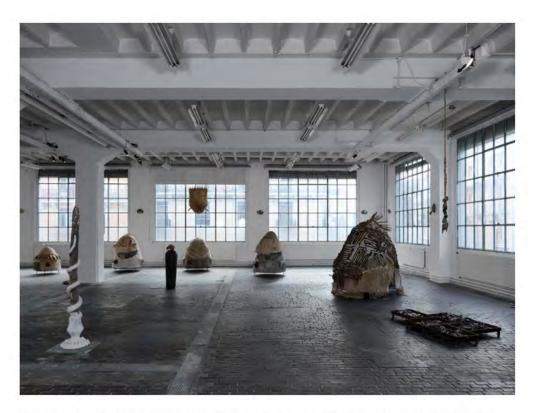
Roberto Cuoghi, Untitled, 2015, 131 x 30 x 30 cm. Courtesy: Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva; photograph: Alessandra Sofia

The first subject that Cuoghi shape-shifts is himself. All of Cuoghi's works related to portraiture are displayed on a single, dimly lit floor: a smart curatorial move, since that way faces and characters emerge like ghosts from the darkness. The exhibition opens with the series 'Il Coccodeista' (1997, an untranslatable wordplay, involving a man's ability to cackle): in texts and drawings marked on tracing paper, the artist appears like a cyberpunk cartoon, with bulky eyes and a kamikaze red-and-white bandana. He made them while wearing special goggles reversing orientation, allowing him flaunt 'normal' perspective. Punk is a key reference for Cuoghi's DIY ethic. In 1998 he severed ties with his 'young artist' public persona by radically altering his body: burying his former skinny self under layers of fat, dyeing his hair grey and wearing his father's clothes for seven years. It was not only a way to resurrect and 'kill' again, in due time, the father, but also a strategy to remove himself from the constraints of the contemporary.



Roberto Cuoghi, Untitled, 2010. 68 x 83 cm; Courtesy: Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva; photograph: Alessandra Sofia

The black and white 'Asincroni' (Asynchronies, 2003–4) painted in symbolist style on overlaid sheets of transparent triacetate, on view in Geneva, embody Cuoghi's out-of-sync condition. His multiple self-portraits on paper (2010) accentuate dissonant features, so that Cuoghi never quite looks like Cuoghi. A 2012 series demystifies and caricatures the 'Cuoghi legend': in it, the model for the artist's physical transformation is the logo of a cigar brand. The second floor is, by contrast, flooded in natural light. A series of sculptural works (from 2012 to 2015) belong to the cycle 'Pazuzu' – the Assyrian god of winds, but also the demon of the 1973 horror film *The Exorcist*, whose original statuette, held by the Louvre and only a few centimetres high, Cuoghi first turned into a giant synthetic replica in 2008. He then kept morphing and fracturing it, in different media and scales, so that it gradually lost resolution and, also, credibility.



Roberto Cuoghi, exhibition view at Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva. Courtesy: Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva

Despite the 'archaic' appearance of his works, Cuoghi often uses 3D scanning and printing, as in the series 'Putiferio' (2016). 'Putifero' brings together a group of anthropomorphic kilns – built to make ceramic sculptures of crabs during an eponymous live performance on the island of Hydra – as well as the seductively beautiful, glazed sculptures that resulted. On the last floor, which compresses the artist's powerful sound pieces, adapted for headphones (Šuillakku, 2017, or Mei Gui, 2017), cinema screens loop a dozen documentary videos about 'Putiferio'. The artist sent the same digital shots of the day to different editors, so that the action is narrated in different soundtracks and keys – low tech, promotional, cheesy, naïve, touristy, epic. But we repeatedly see the same Cuoghi working in front of the blazing fire, uncovering his face covered in sweat, embracing the collector Dakis Joannou, who smiles like a benign father: another sabotage, it seems, of the artist's latest incarnation as homo faber.

Main image: Roberto Cuoghi, Untitled (detail), 2015, 187 x 37 x 37 cm. Courtesy: Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva; photograph: Alessandra Sofia

BARBARA CASAVECCHIA

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FEATURE

No Gods, No Masters

Charlotte Laubard on Roberto Cuoghi as autodidact



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Page 41: SS(VIZ)c (2012) Photography by Alessandra Sofia

This page: S(IGr)mm (2014) Photography by Alessandra Sofia



Roberto Cuoghi (b. 1973, Italy) is not a self-taught artist. He did not train himself, and although he recalls that his scholastic career was punctuated by defiance, opposition and interruption [conversation with the artist, Milan, July 4, 2016], he was finally awarded a diploma at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in 2001. But self-education — the process of learning without a teacher - seems to be an essential key to understanding his work. What stands out in Cuoghi's practice across the twenty years since he left art school is his obstinate drive to develop each project like a leap into the unknown. Indeed, for projects such as Il Coccodeista (1997); The Goodgriefies (2000); the maps and the black paintings made between 2003 and 2007; the series of sound works Mbube (2005), Mei Gui (2006) and Šuillakku (2008); and the more recent sculptures related to Pazuzu, the artist carried out research, sometimes for years at a time, and gained new knowledge and skills that were often outside his own culture and experience. So one must ask: What drives Roberto Cuoghi to constantly confront his experience and creative process with ever-changing motivations and methodologies?

Although the figure of the self-taught artist has long fed the myth of an isolated individual fighting the system, it is now the subject of specific studies in the fields of educational and cognitive science. Driven by a search for identity and self-fulfillment, self-education — which refers to all situations of solitary learning — is now considered to be a valuable resource. Its emancipatory aspect, its ability to adapt to the changes in our environment (on a day-to-day basis or in difficult situations) and its creative function when the learner ventures into terra incognita are now recognized. Yet, as a way of learning by doing, self-education has never been the subject of an in-depth study in the field of art. This is a paradox, since any contemporary artist is expected to break with tradition or to at least seek, within themselves, the resources required to renew the language of art. Any innovative procedure would therefore consist of autodidactic moments and gestures. In the case of Roberto Cuoghi, self-learning is not only a constituent element of the creative process but forms its driving force and raison d'être.

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Before starting a closer analysis of Roberto Cuoghi's creative process, it must be noted that the artist has never mentioned self-learning as an aim or reference in his work. Neither does he share the bent of many contemporary artists for amateur, dilettante or Sunday-painter postures. His approach is more akin to fundamental research and experimentation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge of phenomena or observable facts without envisaging any particular application. This is particularly obvious in his first project, Il Coccodeista (1997). We know that the artist wished to wear glass prisms (generally used in telescopes) to test his brain's ability to adapt to inverted visual input, from top to bottom and from left to right, and to the drastic reduction of the field of vision thus generated. Although the experiment was a failure for the artist and a painful sensory and physical experience lasting several days, it resulted in a number of drawings and texts. Cuoghi states that the experiment was never intentionally designed to produce artifacts or be a performance in itself. Although the drawings and texts are the traces that remain, the artist — affected by sensory deprivation — gave them a curative function: making them was "the most peaceful moment of the day" [Ibid.]. The "unusual slowness" of their making and their synthetic nature gave them a "special quality" that subsequently led him to keep them, whereas he had given the first attempts to people in his circle. The series of maps results from the same experiential logic: drawing a planisphere "with no reference points and from memory" [Ibid.]. The lines on the different glass plates that the artist placed one on top of the other enabled him to correct mistakes while leaving the different stages of the process visible. The materials used were also the subject of experimentation; the mixing of black pigments with alcohol and salts produced various types of crystallization, generating optical effects that were amplified by their superposition on the different layers of glass.

Such experiments, focused on practices and materials, are operative in most of Cuoghi's works: the making of a cartoon film with no technical knowledge of animation (*The Goodgriefies*); the composing of songs without any musical training (*Mbube*, *Mei Gui*, Šuillakku); and the adaptation of a 3-D printer for the production of clay sculptures (the "Putiferio" series).

Putiferio (2014) Installation view Photography by Alessandra Sofia

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Next page: Documentary photograph (2016)

Whereas other artists delegate production to skilled craftsmen and technicians as a matter of course, Cuoghi insists on learning these various processes himself, necessitating months or even years of intense learning. The approach suggests a kind of passionate, do-it-yourself heroism. But it also and above all affirms the total autonomy of the working process. A visit to his studio, in an old food warehouse on the outskirts of Milan, is enough to give the measure of this. Everything here has been designed for the performance of tasks with no outside help. There are two modeling areas, several large kilns, a chemistry laboratory, a multimedia studio, a kitchen, and a storage facility - all fitted out over the years with Alessandra Sofia and Nicoletta De Rosa, his assistants and partners in life. They form a small, intensely close community, notable for its self-sufficiency. The two companions participate fully in the work process by conducting theoretical and practical research. Other tasks are delegated with precision: one has a number of technical operations to perform, while the other handles all communication with the outside world, including the professional art world.

The artist's desire to formulate his own rules and procedures is also seen in his deliberate choice to forgo the usual or expected means. He did not own a computer and so had to buy one, together with a graphic tablet and a stylus, for the production of the animated cartoon The Goodgriefies. Unexpectedly, he chose to use Flash, a software program only moderately suitable for animation and whose limits interested him with regard to what he could experience and go beyond. Similarly, he used a 3-D printer for his latest work but replaced the plastic needed for FDM (fused deposition modeling) with clay. After much trial and error, he succeeded in creating machine-made ceramic objects by adding a series of medical instruments such as syringes. These "miscast" relationships do not apply to materials alone. They also inform his subject matter and strategies of representation. Production of The Goodgriefies was driven by a desire to turn iconic cartoon characters into their unimaginable opposites: old people bedridden or suffering intolerable physical deformities (a continuation of his willful but undocumented acceleration into old age). When Cuoghi decided to go into music, he chose songs from other places and cultural periods, in particular that of the Zulu people of 1940s South Africa (Mbube) and Shanghai before the Cultural Revolution (Mei Gui). Each have distinct melodic, instrumental and vocal features. The covers that he made were composed with instruments chosen for their acoustic similarity, or were simply invented by the artist. He also had to practice the vocal modulations needed to imitate the lyrics - yet without understanding their meaning. Although at first this approach suggested that of an amateur who likes to sing his favorite tunes, this venture differed in its means and result: sonic artifacts that do not resemble anything known.

Cuoghi describes his sound composition as "an improvisation stretched out in time." He adds: "I use an ability I don't have. I don't know how to do any of the things I do, so I am forced to do them hundreds of times to get it right. When I am starting to learn my work is done.

It is a kind of privilege not to have any specific training; it's a method that forces you to imagine everything" [interview by Andrea Viliani, in Šuillakku by Roberto Cuoghi (blog), October 16, 2009, https://shuillakku. wordpress.com/2009/10/16/51/ (accessed January 2017)]. Several parts of this statement shed light on the artist's working process and confirm the extent to which self-learning forms the backbone of his praxis. Some of his emblematic features are seen here; an inherent empiricism, the setting up of elementary techniques for learning (the act of repetition already mentioned, the imitation of existing models, the process of trial and error — all operations that remain intentionally perceptible in the artist's resulting works), the rigorous and rational nature of the method, and the need to fire the imagination and innovate when in unknown territory.

Autodidacts have long been reproached for the "eclecticism" of their knowledge, which would disqualify them in the face of specialists [Pierre Bourdieu, La distinction: Critique sociale du jugement, Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1979, p. 379]. And as a matter of fact, the great diversity of subjects addressed by Cuoghi, his desire to break with his previous knowledge, the appropriation of elements foreign to his culture, their heterodox relational placements and misuses, are enough to give any specialist a headache. Yet they shed light on the pragmatic mental operations that are materialized in the process of creative self-learning. It thus follows that reasoning by analogy must occupy a preeminent position in Cuoghi's work. According to Emmanuel Sander, the author of several works on the function of thinking by analogy, the latter likely consists of the use of "knowledge on phenomena or situations gained for application to other phenomena or situations in order to understand or affect them using similarities perceived but without being sure whether they are in the same category and hence pertinent" [Emmanuel Sander, L'analogie, du naïf au créatif: analogie et catégorisation, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000, p. III]. The artist uses analogy to invent instruments to reproduce certain sounds in the songs that he wants to imitate; or uses a 3-D printer to make ceramic sculptures, establishing a unweildy parallel between the device's method of plastic concretion and the traditional use of clay. Long criticized, this implicit, intuitive method of thinking now has the approval of the cognitive sciences, which recognize its centrality in the processes of cognitive construction and self-expression, and celebrate its role in the development of innovations and major scientific discoveries. In Cuoghi's work, the "improvisations" and misuses that result from such analogies form the foundations of an informal protocol that allows him to transgress the accepted rules and to establish a new experimental context. The tortuous progress and the finds thus generated are related to the aim of "discovery," to "the spirit of adventure." The artist insists: "When the result coincides with the initial idea, then that is death." To avoid such vexation, he has to "do something in an excessive way ... so as no longer to see things at their real distance, [to] lose a sense of proportion and go off the road" [conversation with the artist].



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His decision to learn with no master or form of instruction is a reflexive choice aimed at calling into question the "models" and "norms" that have been instituted; by leaving the pathway of uses, traditions and conditioned reflexes, he devotes himself to the hope of producing a "new standard," a "change in canons."

Appropriation is the second fundamental aspect of Cuoghi's self-learning practice. The use of disparate subjects and skills belonging neither to his culture nor to his experience is particularly striking, notably in his

recent works related to Assyrian civilization. In a long talk with Andrea Viliani he described in detail the Herculean process of making Šuillakku. This involved the creation *ex nihilo* of the Assyrians' lament (with a choir and orchestra) over the destruction of Nineveh, their capital. In the interview Cuoghi discussed the legitimacy of his use of meager historical, archaeological and linguistic remnants to create songs and rituals of a past civilization: "The idea of a lament arose due to the impossibility of having a reference, and if there ever

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was a mourning chant for the ruins of Nineveh it has been lost forever, it was a case of genocide" [interview by Andrea Viliani]. Intending to write and perform incantations and musical lamentations himself, Cuoghi sought rare descriptions of the music of the time. He thus used certain portions of Utukkū Lemnūtu, the anthology of Akkadian incantations, to ward off evil demons. He composed a melody inspired by his reading of microtonal Assyrian music and single-interval melodies from the Hebraic area. He reconstructed instruments (antelope and ram horns, trumpets, reed flutes, a lyre, etc.) seen in bas-reliefs or found in tombs, and he drew inspiration from the series of instruments listed in the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament. When lacking information, he went beyond experimental archaeology and invented pronunciations of (dead) Akkadian and Sumerian languages, drawing inspiration from Hebraic and ancient Arabic conventions. He borrowed instruments from other cultures (Ethiopia, Tibet, the Far East, etc.) and added some that are either more conventional or that he invented (a synthesizer, rattles and castanets made from shells or leaves, etc.). Finally, for the structure of the theme, he chose to follow the psychological stages of death as described in manuals for assisting terminal patients. Cuoghi's freedom and impertinence in using and changing other sources or references make it possible to refine what is understood here by "appropriation." In this case, these are not the practices of copying and quotation that generally characterize strategies of appropriation in contemporary art. Cuoghi's borrowing is closer to the hybridization and syncretism seen in globalized cultural practices. In his support for a definition of cultural appropriation as an individual hermeneutic procedure, the anthropologist Arnd Schneider underlines the extent to which the fact of "appropriating" (etymologically "making one's own," derived from the Latin proprius, "individual, personal") foreign cultural elements involves a specific process of knowledge and development of oneself that conflicts with the usual theoretical representations that mark appropriation with the seal of usurpation and inauthenticity. Basing his reflection on the thinking of the philosopher Paul Ricoeur, he stresses that the appropriation of what is foreign to us is a "practice and learning experience" whose transformative properties imply "the dispossessing of one's narcissistic ego so as to generate not only an affinity with the other but a new understanding of oneself" [Arnd Schneider, "Sull'appropriazione: Un riesame critico del concetto e delle sue applicazioni nelle pratiche artistiche globali," Antropologia 13 (2011), http://www.ledijournals.com/ojs/ index.php/antropologia/article/view/166 (accessed January 2017)]. This transformative dimension affects not only the meaning of the cultural elements assimilated but is an epistemological procedure that transmutes the very ethos of the appropriator. Roberto Cuoghi becomes not simply an autodidact and eccentric specialist in Mesopotamian culture, as evidenced by his more recent sculptures centered on the figure of Pazuzu, the demon of ancient Mesopotamia. His megalomaniacal

and unorthodox efforts to compose and execute, in the first person and over a period of several years, the swansong of an entire civilization, seems motivated by a determination to expose the threat of oblivion to any human enterprise. The remakes of Zulu and Chinese songs stem from an intent to "do justice" to "forgotten, discredited things ... to do something disproportionate and remarkable with them" [conversation with the artist]. Here, appropriation is driven by an ethic expressed by a mode of assimilation - a long and intense process of searching for historical data — and by both moral and physical identification. Like a contemporary Zelig, Cuoghi's identity mutates during each of his projects. In fact, autodidacts are not only criticized for the eclecticism of their knowledge but also for their composite identities [Hélène Bézille, L'autodidacte, entre pratiques et représentations sociales, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003, chapter 3]. The "dispossession" mentioned by Schneider (above) that Paul Ricoeur associates with "renouncement," a "fundamental moment in appropriation that distinguishes it from any other form of 'taking possession,'" [Paul Ricoeur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 191, quoted by Schneider] is the culminant point and an obligatory stage on the road to knowledge of others and of oneself. To do justice, the artist does not merely quote or borrow but renders homage through transformation and excess. Listening to the atypical sound compositions, which he takes care to play through numerous loudspeakers to spatialize the voices and sounds in exhibition venues devoid of any visual references, is the culmination of an intense, disturbing and unforgettable process of estrangement that the artist invites us to experience as well.

(Translated from French by Simon Barnard.)

This text is excerpted from PERLA POLLINA, Roberto Cuoghi, 1996–2016, the first complete monograph on the artist, edited by Andrea Bellini and forthcoming from Hatje Cantz, Munich.

"Roberto Cuoghi: PERLA POLLINA,"
the first mid-career retrospective of the artist,
is on view at the Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva,
until April 30. The show will travel to MADRE, Naples
(May 15–September 11, 2017) and to the Kölnischer
Kunstverein, Cologne (October 14–December 17, 2017).
Also, Cuoghi will represent Italy at the
57th Venice Biennale, opening on May 13, 2017.

Charlotte Laubard is an art historian and independent curator. She teaches at the Haute École d'art et de design (HEAD), Geneva, and is the artistic director of the 2017 edition of Paris Nuit Blanche. Previous page: SS(IIIGr)c (2015) Photography by Alessandra Sofia

All images courtesy of the Artist; Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; and Lehmann Maupin, New York

Frog

Interview

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Roberto Guoghi

G

Interview
par
Seungduk Kim,
traduction
Lugi de Poli
&
Éric Troncy,
photographies
Félix Gautherot
&
Christina

Vryakou

omment définir l'idée principale qui sous-tend votre œuvre ? Les mots « métamorphose » et « mutation » peuvent-ils être employés ?

On pourrait les utiliser, comme on pourrait aussi les utiliser pour différencier quelque chose de mort de quelque chose de vivant. "métamorphose" tout comme "identité" semblent des mots qu'on utilise pour donner consistance à des expositions sans thème. Il y a des artistes tout de noir vêtus qui disent : "Moi, je construis un alphabet qui me permet d'établir un rapport" ou encore "mon approche est photographique dans le sens étymologique". Moi, vêtu de noir, je ressemble à un égorgeur de al-Baghdadi.

— La volonté de produire de l'art, n'importe quel matériau, une capacité, des données, des mythes... tout ceci peut entrer dans la conception d'une forme artistique. Pourriez-vous révéler, pour ce qui vous concerne, ce qui forme le point de départ?

Je n'ai rien à révéler, sauf à vous souhaiter de ne faire dans votre vie que des choix non lucides. C'est ainsi que l'on trouve la genèse des désirs.

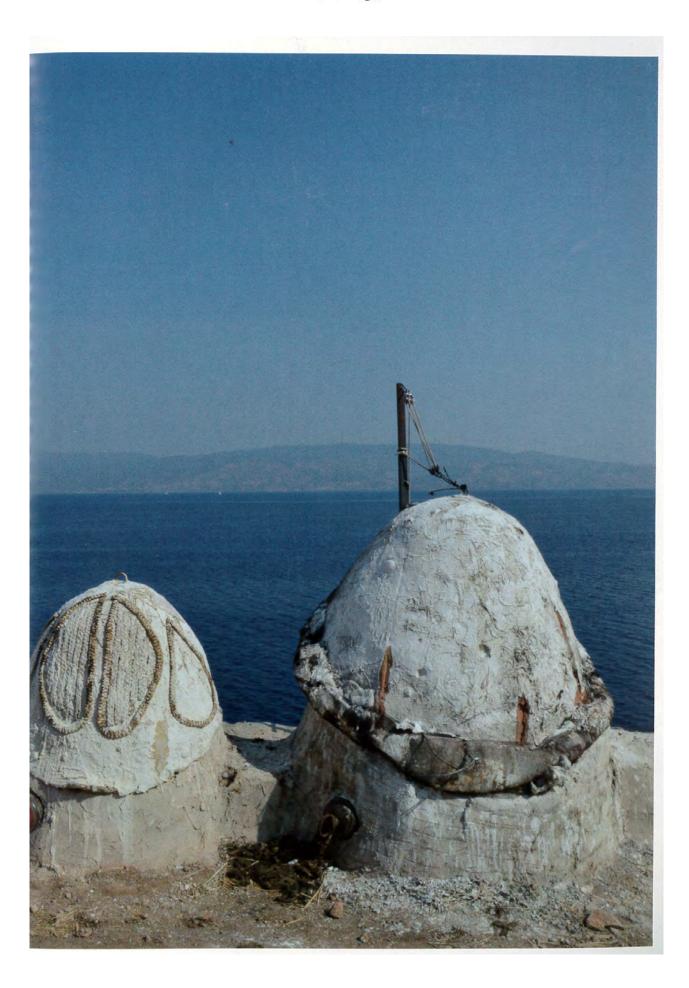
 Le monde de l'art aime les simplifications : définir un artiste en fonction d'une forme, d'un style, d'une préoccupation... Votre travail, en revanche, s'y refuse parce que chaque série d'œuvres requiert des connaissances spécifiques, implique des études et des procédés particuliers. Lorsque vous entreprenez une nouvelle série, savez-vous où vous allez ou vous réservez-vous la possibilité de vous laisser entraîner loin de votre idée de départ?

Tout arrive en même temps, et mon esprit est tellement ouvert et mon sens de la liberté tellement développé que je finis par m'enfermer dans une pièce. Le chaos c'est l'ordre non encore perçu, mais tant que vous ne le percevez pas c'est seulement un foutoir.

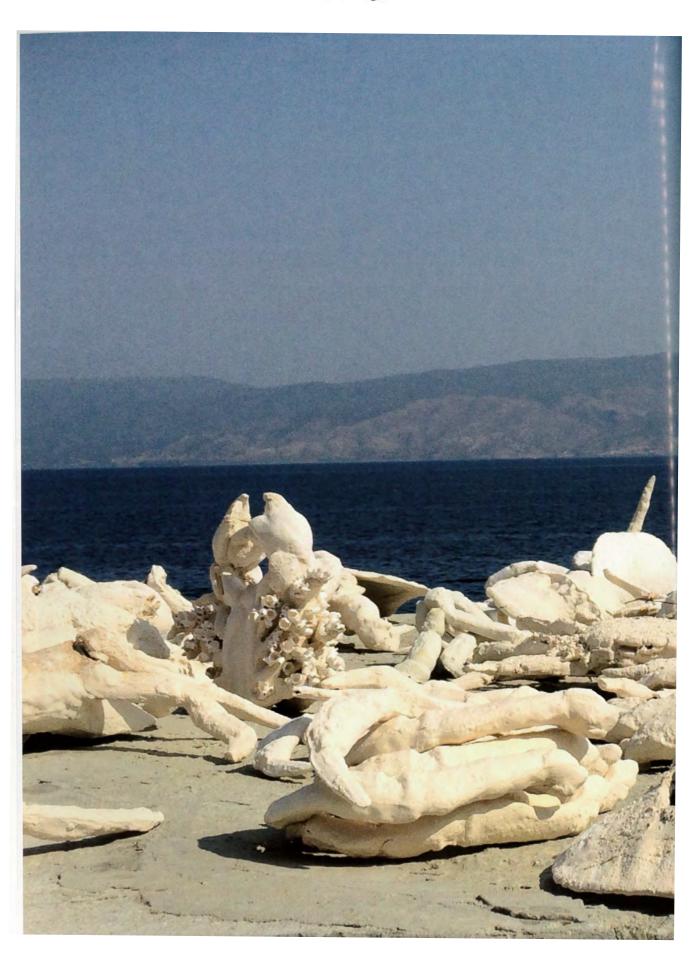
— J'ai lu ceci, que vous aviez dit : « Il y a quelque chose de possessif dans tout ce que je fais. » Pouvez-vous dire comment cette notion, forte, de possession s'applique à votre propre personne?

Je crois avoir fait allusion au moment où s'enracine une obsession. Dans mon travail, savoir se modérer n'est pas professionnel. L'idéal reste l'inépuisable valorisation de la puissance, la propriété de ce que j'appelle "la démesure", comprise comme pulsion originelle, et qui consiste en une seule chose : grandir à partir de ses propres bases. Si une idée ne se comporte pas comme un cancer, elle est à négliger. Notre attention se porte sur le cancer et jamais sur un sujet sain. Les perles sont une maladie du coquillage. Ce qui crée la controverse, dans une société de droit, c'est de savoir si la démesure est un "droit naturel".

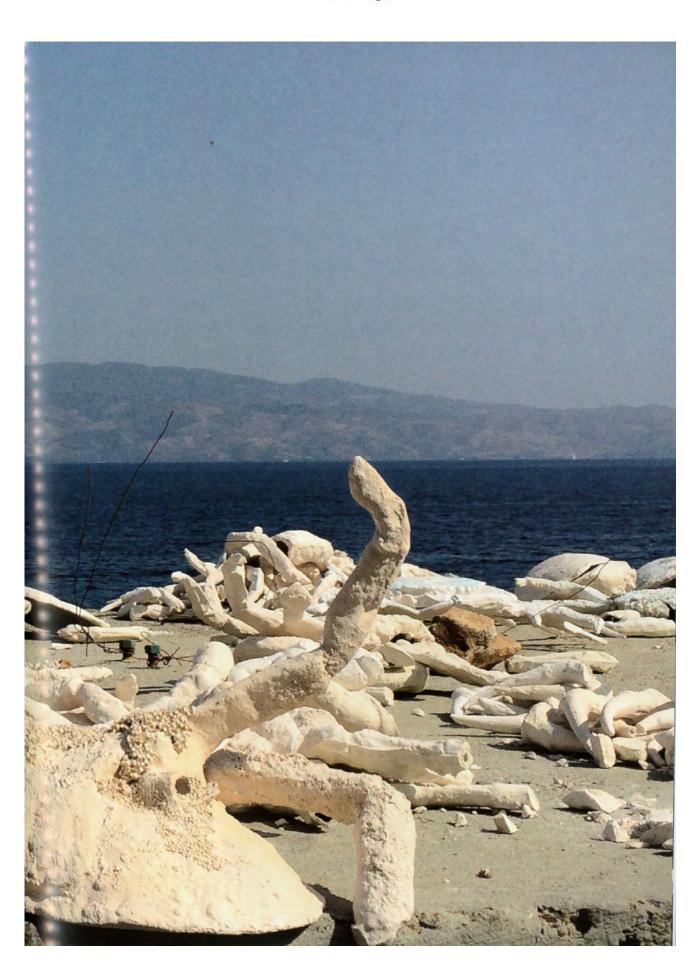
 Chacune de vos séries fait preuve de stratégies formelles spécifiques et diverses, qu'elles renvoient à la culture populaire et à ses attributs



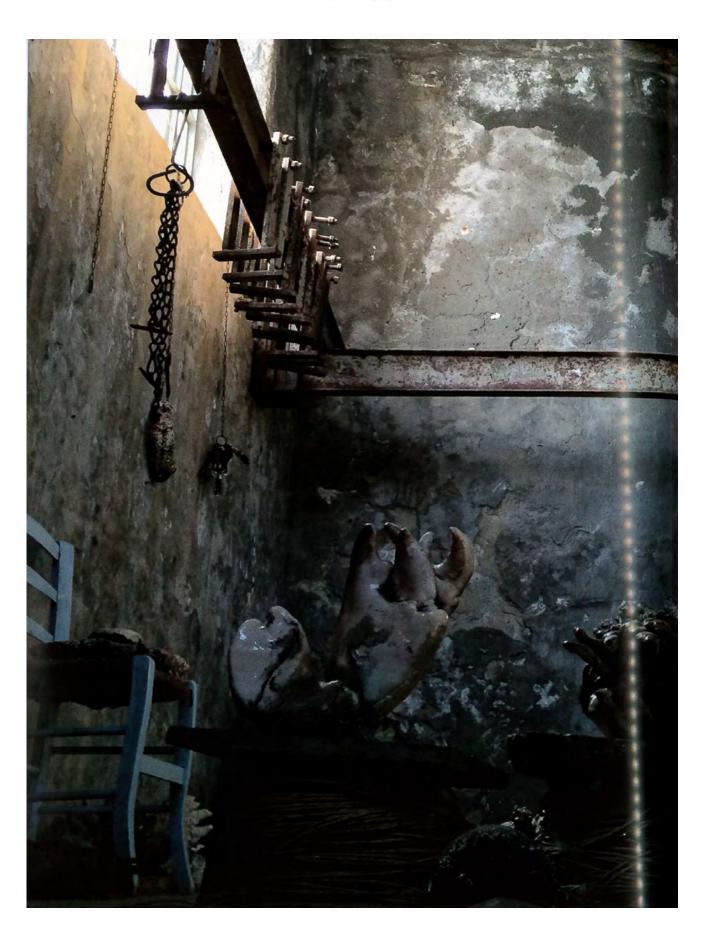
Galerie Chantal Crousel



Galerie Chantal Crousel



Galerie Chantal Crousel



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Frog



particuliers ou à la mythologie et à l'histoire. Vous considérez-vous comme une sorte de centre de recherche au service de vos œuvres, capable de produire de nouvelles formes et de nouvelles situations ?

De manière idéale, le centre de recherche n'est au service que de nos propres névroses et les œuvres existent parce que le centre de recherche ne reçoit pas de subventions à fonds perdu.

— Qu'est ce que « Hydra Project », votre prochaine exposition ?

Ma première idée était de réaliser une barrière de corail en porcelaine à fixer sur les récifs, en suivant la logique des contrepoints de l'Art de la Fugue de Bach, mais ce fut tellement compliqué de s'équiper pour travailler la céramique que lorsque tout fut prêt, il était déjà trop tard. Plus je pensais aux modules d'une barrière de corail artificielle et plus cela me semblait un genre de truc de hipster... alors nous sommes allés sur place et j'ai remarqué que l'abattoir qui devait accueillir l'exposition était recouvert de nids de guêpes, lesquelles en plus de la cellulose des arbres utilisent aussi la terre. A l'intérieur de chaque nid, on trouve des araignées comme réserve pour les larves, et ainsi j'ai pensé aux crabes de Hydra, qui, depuis des années, ont complètement disparu de l'île. J'ai pensé vouloir littéralement pêcher mes crabes pendant leur cuisson à l'intérieur de fours à bois rudimentaires. A Milan, nous avons passé l'hiver à perfectionner un système d'impression en 3D en utilisant l'argile avec quelques appareils à contrôle numérique qui précisément s'appellent WASP. Un grand nombre des crabes en céramique proviennent du supermarché, nous les avons décongelés uniquement pour

reconstruire leur anatomie à l'aide de prises de vues photographiques. Certains sont articulés, d'autres sont rigidifiés par des incrustations que nous avons préparées en trempant des Tampax et des cotons-tiges dans l'argile. Nous avons apporté sur l'île un calendrier chinois coupé en morceaux et beaucoup de Qian Zhi, ces billets de banque en papier de riz que l'on brûle devant les tombes pour enrichir les morts. A Hydra, nous avons travaillé environ une semaine, en préparant des bassines de mixtures alimentaires à base de ferments, de lait de chèvre et de protéines, et nous avons construit et assemblé deux types de fours. Terry Davies nous a aidés avec quatre fours de papier et de terre crue, entièrement remplis de crabes, mais malheureusement l'un d'eux a pris feu avant l'inauguration et un autre n'a pas pu fonctionner parce qu'il occupait l'emplacement réservé à un marchand de glaces ambulant.

Par conséquent, les fours de papier et de terre ne sont restés plus que deux, le plus petit sur le toit de la boucherie et le plus grand au début d'un sentier en descente utilisé pour un long four en tranchée. Dans ce cas, la différence de niveau entre la chambre de combustion et le conduit de fumée a permis le fonctionnement d'une suite de coupoles en forme de glands. La coloration des crabes dans les fours en papier a été réalisée par enfumage. Nous avons enveloppé chaque crabe avec de longues algues marines riches en sel, des aiguilles de pin, des herbes aromatiques, du café et des excréments d'âne. Le four en tranchée au contraire a enfumé des crabes jusqu'à ce qu'il dépasse les mille degrés centigrades. A cette température, les surfaces redeviennent propres ou bien tout se vitrifie, ainsi j'ai extrait les crabes l'un

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après l'autre jusqu'à minuit, faisant quelques pauses au cours desquelles je me faisais entièrement arroser, alors que je refroidissais brutalement les crabes en les trempant dans les bassines de mixtures alimentaires qui avaient fermenté pendant une semaine sous le soleil. Les substances fermentées en suspension grillent au contact de la surface en céramique en créant une décoration, fruit de cette rencontre improbable à hautes températures. Plusieurs pièces se cassent justement en raison du choc thermique, et cela se produisit. Toutefois, si un vase cassé n'est plus un vase, un crabe cassé peut toujours être un crabe mort.

Je n'ai pas été en mesure d'expliquer autrement la raison qui m'a fait choisir les crabes, mais justement, pendant l'inauguration, j'ai appris que peut-être mon préconscient avait organisé un rendezvous surprise. Ce soir là, la nuit entre le 20 et le 21 juin, le soleil est dans sa position au-dessus du tropique du Cancer et pour la première fois, après un demi-siècle, le solstice d'été s'est produit lors de la pleine lune. La constellation du Cancer doit son origine à l'hommage de Héra à l'intrépide crabe gardien de l'entrée du règne des morts où vivait l'Hydre. En entrant dans la constellation du Cancer, le soleil s'est trouvé à l'opposé de la pleine lune, opposé à son opposé et tous les deux alignés au centre de rotation de notre galaxie, face à un trou noir d'une densité de millions de soleils, le lieu zodiacal de l'intuition qui finit par être un axis mundi, la conjonction symbolique entre ciel et terre avec le règne des morts.

Le même phénomène se répétera en 2062. La logique des symboles est cohérente et systématique et elle intervient sans contrôle. Et le fait de n'avoir rien su de tout cela, sinon pendant l'inauguration, a été idéal pour une authentique expérience rituelle de mythes cosmiques. A partir de ce moment, pendant les pauses, à tous ceux qui continuaient à me demander pourquoi j'avais fait des crabes, je répondais : "Cherchez sur Google."



L'œil DU COLLECTIONNEUR

TENDANCES

PAR CHRISTINE COSTE

HYDRA, NOUVELLE ARCADIE DES MÉCÈNES ET COLLECTIONNEURS

Hier île de prédilection des écrivains, cinéastes et artistes, Hydra est devenu chaque été un haut lieu de l'art contemporain en Grèce.



ydra, ce «roc qui sort de la mer comme une énorme miche de pain pétrifié. C'est le pain changé en pierre que recoit l'artiste en récom-

pense de son labeur, quand il découvre la Terre promise », écrit Henry Miller dans Le Colosse de Maroussi après un long voyage en Grèce en 1939. « L'éloquence du roc » abrupt baigné de bleu où tout véhicule est prohibé et de son port circonscrit à de belles demeures étagées a toujours des allures d'Arcadie. Depuis Henry Miller, plus d'un étranger en ces lieux, tels Lawrence Durrell ou Leonard Cohen, est tombé sous le charme de cette île du golfe Saronique, terre d'armateurs et de pêcheurs à une heure et demie en bateau du Pirée. Écrivains, cinéastes ou artistes grecs continuent de s'y arrimer. C'est dans la maison familiale du peintre, sculpteur, graveur et écrivain Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghikas qu'a logé Henry Miller lors de son séjour à Hydra. C'est dans l'ancienne maison de Marianne Jensen, muse de Leonard Cohen et de sa chanson So Long Marianne, que Pauline Simons et son époux, l'artiste Yannis Kottis originaire de Corinthe, ont choisi d'établir il y a quatre ans leur résidence en Grèce, séduits « par la beauté du site où l'on ne circule qu'à pied ». Cette installation pour la journaliste française, spécialiste du marché de l'art, a rimé avec son projet HYam (Hydra for artists of the mediterranean), association francogrecque créée dans la foulée en 2014 «dans le but, dit-elle, d'accompagner les artistes émergents issus de pays de la Méditerranée dans la promotion de leur travail sur la scène internationale ».

D'UNE INSTALLATION À L'AUTRE

The Expectation, de la jeune artiste grecque Maria Tsagkari, est la première œuvre in situ éphémère produite par HYam à Hydra [photos]. Dans un parterre de roches, longé par un chemin surplombant la mer, l'installation se développe, discret maillage disséminé de fleurs et de plantes bleues, reproductions à l'identique d'origan, d'immortelles, de chardons et de lavande que l'on retrouve à leurs côtés odorants et asséchés. La fleur



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bleue décrite dans le rêve du héros du roman inachevé de Novalis, Heinrich von Ofterdingen, matrice originelle de l'œuvre, convoque en ces terrains arides assoiffés un message d'espoir et de paix. La vision tranche avec l'inquiétant désordre de crabes et de pinces de crabe en céramique conçu par Roberto Cuoghi dans l'ancien abattoir de l'île, alloué par la municipalité à la puissante et prestigieuse DESTE Foundation de l'homme d'affaires et grand collectionneur Dakis Joannou. D'une installation à l'autre, il n'y a qu'un pas. Chaque été, la sévère construction élevée à flanc de rochers léchés par la mer, désormais référencée sous le nom de la Projectspace Slaughterhouse Hydra, accueille une installation inédite d'un artiste de renom. Depuis Matthew Barney et Elizabeth Peyton, en 2009, s'y sont succédé Maurizio Cattelan, Urs Fischer et Paul Chan.

En quelques années, Hydra est devenu le terreau de projets, de lieux et d'expositions de haut niveau portés par des collectionneurs et des mécènes aux profils très différents. Toutes sont en accès libre. Sur les hauteurs du village, c'est un autre grand collectionneur et mécène grec, Dimitris Daskalopoulos, président de la NEON Foundation, qui apporte son soutien à l'artiste Dimitrios Antonitsis pour son exposition collective de grande qualité à la Hydra School Projects installée dans l'ancien lycée d'Hydra. La collectionneuse et mécène américaine Pauline Karpidas, veuve aujourd'hui de l'arma-

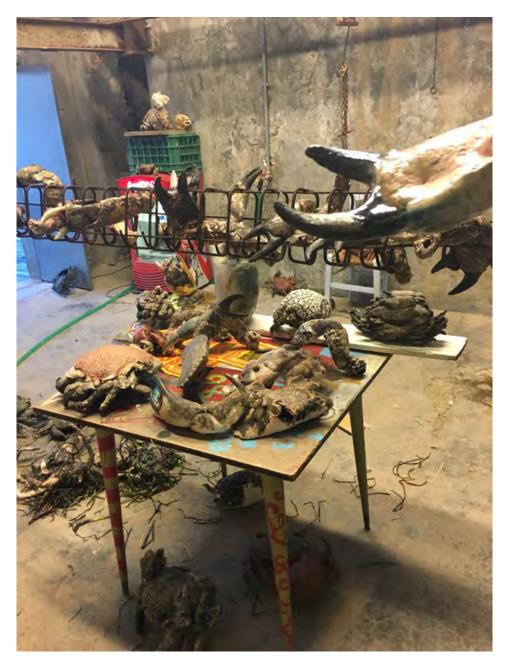
teur grec Constantine Karpidas, a fait figure de pionnière en ouvrant en 1999 la Hydra Workshop, autre vitrine d'artistes contemporains internationaux ou grecs de renom ou en passe de l'être. Si l'ancrage dans le port d'Hydra du yacht de Dakis Joannou conçu par Jeff Koons ne passe jamais inaperçu, l'ouverture le 24 juillet de la Hydra Workshop est un événement mondain très couru par la jet society qui n'ignore pas que Pauline Karpidas détient l'une des plus belles collections de Warhol, mais aussi la plus belle maison de l'île.

HYam est le dernier né des projets hydriotes avec l'exposition au Musée-Archives historiques d'Hydra proposée par la Fondation Valmont à partir de sa collection d'art contemporain. Le galeriste Thaddaeus Ropac, autre personnalité à posséder une maison dans le village, et membre par ailleurs du jury d'HYam qui a sélectionné Maria Tsagkari, explique cette dynamique par « l'attractivité d'Hydra à la fois place d'une très grande simplicité et d'une haute sophistication ». L'un des autres soutiens de Pauline Simons, François Tajan, président délégué d'Artcurial, est un autre fidèle de l'île. En janvier ou juin 2017 les lauréats de la deuxième édition du prix HYam seront présentés dans les espaces parisiens de la maison de ventes. Car, dans deux ans, c'est un autre artiste, marocain cette fois, qui viendra s'inscrire au même endroit où les fleurs bleues de Maria Tsagkari ont poussé le temps d'un été.



Art roads lead to Athens

Una Meistere 05/07/2016



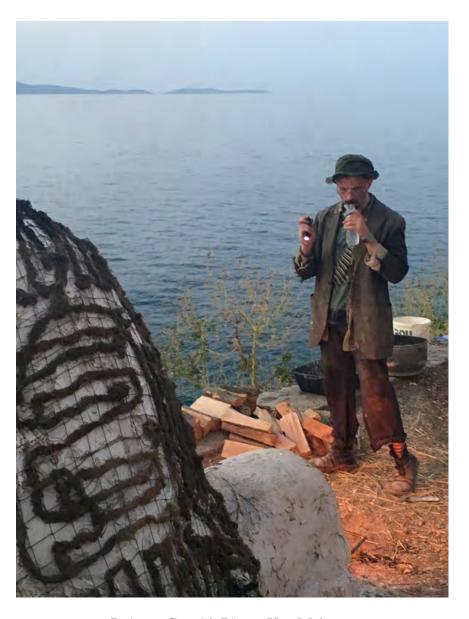
Roberto Cuoghi. Putiferio. DESTE Project Space Slaughterhouse, 2016 Hydra island. Photo: Ainārs Ērglis

Invasion of crabs

A similar story about destruction and the inevitable disintegration of everything can be found in the Putiferio exhibition by Italian artist Roberto Cuoghi, which opened with a full-moon performance at DESTE's Slaughterhouse art space on the island of Hydra.



In the summer heat just before Midsummer, Cuoghi turned the area around the former slaughterhouse into a surreal kiln, with ceramic ovens of various forms and sizes smoking all around. The process brought to mind a unique sacrificial ceremony, with the audience also playing a part in the ritual that balanced on the fragile border between the divine and diabolical. In Latin, putiferio can also mean "chaos" or a "small hell". When Cuoghi arrived on Hydra in January of this year in order to develop the idea for the exhibition, the former slaughterhouse building was full of wasps' nests. He felt unwelcome, unwanted and unnecessary amidst the assault of wasps, and thus he got the idea for a symbolic invasion of crabs. The kilns, fuelled with firewood, garbage and all other manner of flammable materials, "birthed" the crabs with unflagging intensity throughout the evening. The ceramic creatures in various forms and colours then "invaded" and occupied the space inside the former slaughterhouse, forming all sorts of associations – from current geopolitical issues to the goblins in our subconscious minds. With the full moon gleaming above the Aegean Sea, the air was heated by both nature and Cuoghi's kilns, while the artist and two assistants in brightly-coloured gloves bustled about like unearthly alchemists.



Roberto Cuoghi. Photo: Una Meistere



In response to the comment "What a crazy project", Cuoghi (long lost in the trance of artistic creation, a water bottle in one hand and a fire poker in the other) just said, "I'm a crazy person, too."



Roberto Cuoghi. Putiferio. DESTE Project Space Slaughterhouse, 2016 Hydra island. Photo: Una Meistere

Cuoghi is also represented in Joannou's art collection and is one of the collector's favourite artists. Last year the artist curated the Ametria exhibition at the Benaki Museum, which was organised in collaboration with the DESTE foundation. The idea of continuous transformation and changes is one of the main themes in Cuoghi's art. One particular performance of his has already become a thing of legend – in it, the artist outpaced time and portrayed his own father. He began the performance in 1998, at the age of 25, and continued it for several years. During that time, Cuoghi gained weight, grew a long beard, and began dressing and behaving like his father, thereby almost physically knocking down the border between reality and fiction. True, this project cost the artist quite dearly – when, after his father's death, Cuoghi wished to return to his natural role in life and time, the process ended up being painful and slow and even required surgical intervention. But even the surgery was later transformed into art.





Roberto Cuoghi. Putiferio. DESTE Project Space Slaughterhouse, 2016 Hydra island. Photo: Ainārs Ērglis

Cuoghi's Putiferio project, for its part, continues a tradition established by DESTE in 2009, namely, each year devoting the former slaughterhouse to a single artist or artists' group as a home to a work of art created specifically for the space. Previous artists have included Urs Fischer, Matthew Barney, Maurizio Cattelan, Doug Aitken, Pawel Althamer and Paul Chan.

Hydra, located a mere 1.5-hour ferry ride from Athens, is considered one of the country's most romantic islands and has long been a favourite relaxation spot for Greece's aristocracy. Its popularity only grew in the 1950s, when Boy on a Dolphin (1957), with Sophia Loren in the leading role, was filmed there. It was the first film in which Loren spoke English and also the first Hollywood film to be filmed in Greece.





Roberto Cuoghi. Putiferio. DESTE Project Space Slaughterhouse, 2016 Hydra island. Photo: Una Meistere





Roberto Cuoghi. Putiferio. DESTE Project Space Slaughterhouse, 2016 Hydra island. Photo: Una Meistere

A trip to Hydra is like travelling back in time. There are no automobiles on the island, nor are there any bicycles, due to the steep and cobbled roads. The only forms of transportation here are walking, riding a donkey (there are over 500 of the animals on the island) or water taxi. But it usually only takes visitors a very short while to adjust to the much slower and calmer rhythm of life. Because the island's historical heritage is carefully preserved, there are also no new, modern buildings on Hydra, and life mostly centres around the marble-paved port and the quaint nearby streets. Most of the houses are not numbered, because there's simply no need for it. There's also no need for a map, because it's almost impossible to get lost in Hydra town – everyone here knows each other, and visitors feel like they've arrived into a large Greek family. When Joannou's yacht, the Guilty (which is painted with camouflage by Jeff Koons), arrives in Hydra's small harbour, it marks the symbolic beginning of summer and the culture season. Glamorous international guests as well as locals and tourists to the island are all welcome at exhibition openings at the DESTE Project Space Slaughterhouse, giving the events a truly diverse feel.

Roberto Cuoghi's Post-Apocalyptic 'Putiferio' on Hydra, Greece

BY NICHOLAS FORREST | JULY 01, 2016



«PUTIFERIO» by Roberto Cuoghi (© Photo: Fanis Vlastaras & Rebecca Constantopoulou)

"Putiferio" at the DESTE Foundation's Project Space in the former Slaughterhouse on the island of Hydra is a major exhibition by Italian artist Roberto Cuoghi who works in painting, drawing, digital animation, and sound to explore issues surrounding transformation, identity, death, memory, and time – what he describes as facing "complex ideas iconographically"

Continuing Cuoghi's ongoing engagement with the concepts of metamorphosis, "Putiferio" is an investigation into the potential of transforming familiar materials into chaotic and disturbing assemblages. Using a diverse range of materials such as clay, wood, newspaper, and invented mashes, Cuoghi explores the characteristics and properties of materials.

With a title that in Latin means "to bring the stink," but can also "signify chaos or a small taste of hell," according to DESTE, "Putiferio" was inaugurated with an opening night performance that involved the transformation of the area surrounding the Slaughterhouse into a site-specific camp where Cuoghi experimented with archaic ceramic firing techniques.

During the performance, Cuoghi produced about 100 crabs in different colors and patterns, mostly using refractory clay, but also in porcelain and cast iron. The crabs were then installed throughout the

Slaughterhouse, creating a dramatic and theatrical environment reminiscent of some sort of crab invasion scene from a post-apocalyptic horror film.

The firings took place in two different types of kilns, both created by Cuoghi. Paper kilns were used to fire the bisqued pieces while a five-chamber kiln was used to fire pieces that had been coloured using two three-day fermented, smelly brews made to the artist's own personal recipes using yeast, milk proteins, sugar, and flour. Other pieces were coloured using a reduction process.

Born in Milan in 1972, Cuoghi is best known for his extreme seven-year performative experiment, which took place between 1997 and 2005, when he literally transformed himself from a pierced punk artist in his mid-twenties to a man in his sixties like his father, gaining weight, dyeing his hair, adopting his father's mannerisms, and dressing in his father's clothes.

Candidates from the deep water

Clashed with wasps they came to slaughter

Pinching here, biting there,

Oh my fellows please beware!

Smoke and flames, stink and froth,

Splashing in a sulfurous broth

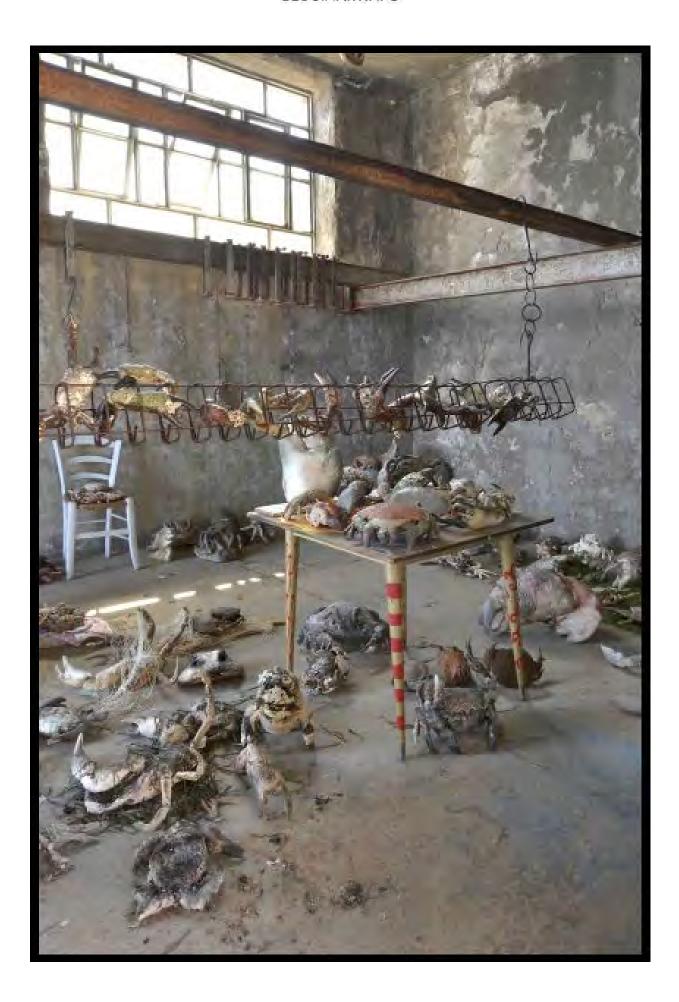
Fished out at the seaside

Unarmed, more dead than alive

The candidates in the eventide

Took your logic for a ride

"PUTIFERIO: A Project by Roberto Cuoghi" runs through September 30 at DESTE Project Space Slaughterhouse in Hydra.







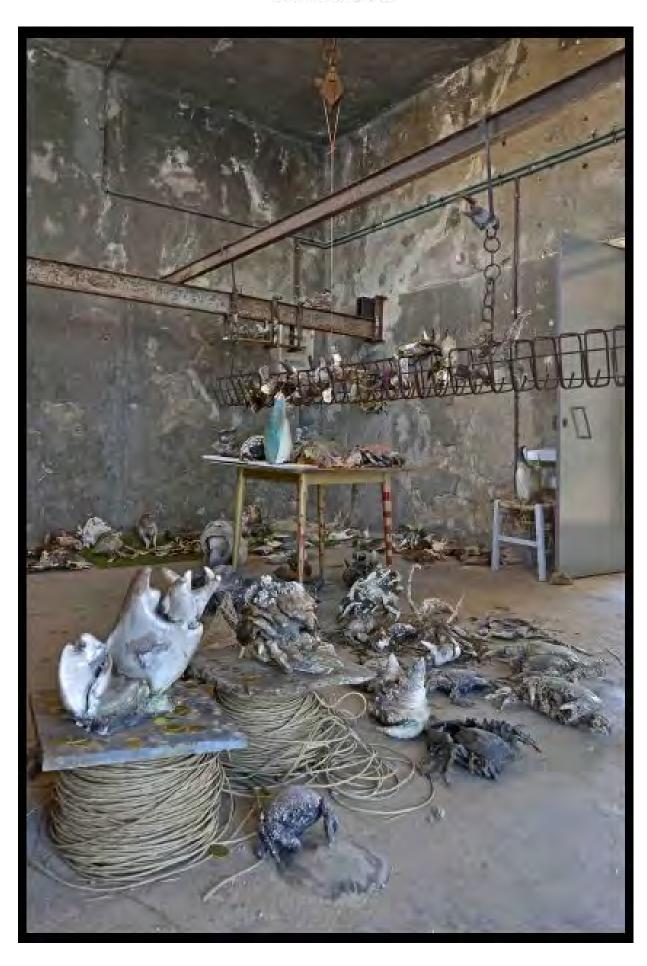


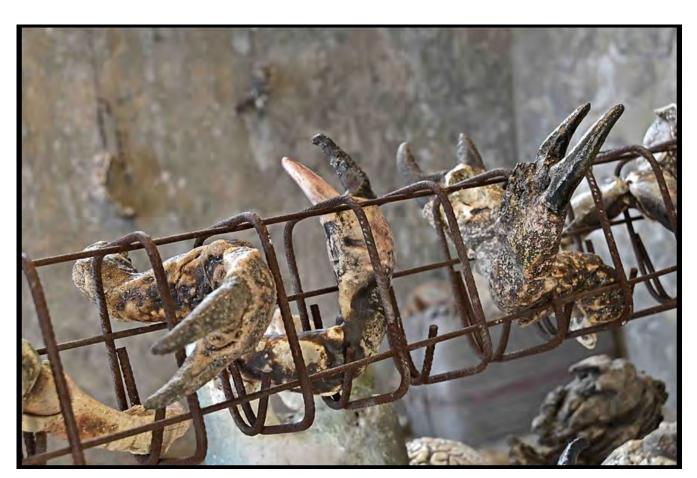














OCULA REPORT

The Equilibrists: A report from Greece

Stephanie Bailey

Greece

21 July 2016





Image: Putiferio - a project by Roberto Cuoghi. Performance, DESTE Foundation Project Space, Slaughterhouse, Hydra. Exhibition Duration: June 21 – September 30, 2016. Photo © Terry Davies.

The second part of DESTE's summer show consisted of an opening performance at the Slaughterhouse on Hydra titled Putiferio (which in Latin means 'bring the stink', 'chaos', or 'a small taste of hell'), for which Roberto Cuoghi fired clay and metal crabs to fill DESTE's project space (a former slaughterhouse) in kilns built outside and above it, apparently modelled after various cultures (and constructed by following YouTube videos). The result is a mesmerising installation (on show to 30 September 2016) that is bound to context, in that it was the island that inspired Cuoghi to produce such an intervention, not to mention the long tradition of kiln-work in the region itself. The opening performance was also staged purposefully on the first night in 50 years that the summer solstice coincided with a full moon, and the day the sun entered Cancer: June 20; a Strawberry Moon that the inauguration of Putiferio marked with a feast of village pies and grilled meat.



Image: Putiferio - A Project by Roberto Cuoghi. Performance, DESTE Foundation Project Space, Slaughterhouse, Hydra. Exhibition duration: June 21 – September 30, 2016. Photo © Alexia Antsakli.

The pastoral undertones of Cuoghi's Slaughterhouse offering were echoed throughout the Greek summer season, from the project space Dio Horia on Mykonos, where a group exhibition curated by Rallou Panagiotou was coupled with solo exhibitions of paintings by Panos Papadopoulos and Cacao Rocks, to the beautiful solo show at the Cultural Foundation of Tinos of work by Vlassis Caniaris, sensitively curated by Christopher Marinos.

My trip ended in the mountains, with another pastoral performance at the Temenos, an outdoor screening located in a field near the Arcadian village of Lyssareia. This is where, since 2004, filmmaker Robert Beavers has been showing Eniaios, the final work of Greek-American avant-garde filmmaker and cofounder of the 'New American Cinema Movement' Gregory Markopoulos. Eniaios is an 80-hour silent 16mm film broken into 22 cycles and was conceived between 1948 and 1990. As the story goes, Beaver and Markopoulos came to Arcadia in 1980s, after leaving the US for Europe in 1967, during which Markopoulos worked on Eniaios, and where he insisted it be shown. The move out of the US was a considered reaction: Markopoulos was abandoning the experimental film scene, even removing his work from distribution. (He also requested a chapter on his work be removed from the 1979 edition of P. Adams Sitney's publication on American cinema, Visionary Film.). The showing this year marked the fourth cycle of Eniaios, which translates to both 'unity' and 'uniqueness' during which visitors would sit under the Arcadian sky from 10pm to 1am watching a flickering Morse code of film edits.

When I've asked people in the past who have been to Temenos what it's like—which is the majority of the Greek art scene at one point in their lives, it seems—they almost always say: 'it's amazing', their voice trailing off as far as their gaze. With experience, as Markopoulos seemed to have intended it, I understand why. The point of Eniaios is being there over the three days in order to roam Arcadia by day, and experience the flickering screen of Eniaios by night. It is an opportunity to see through the eyes of the man who wanted us all to be there in a region defined by the mountains, rivers, and coastline that delineate it—the realm of Pan, the temple of Apollo Epicurius and the river Neda, but also a central site in the resistance against Turkish occupation, and where Markopoulos staged his own rebellion. The beauty of this decision becomes clear when one enters the landscape: Arcadia, a place as evocative—and universal—as Cavafy's Ithaka. An ideal like the classical image of Greece as symbolised by the Parthenon, appropriated as it was in recent times to represent the core values of western civilisation, or even the dystopian afterimage the country has since offered when it comes to the deeper malaise currently afflicting the European Union.



Image: Putiferio - A Project by Roberto Cuoghi. Installation view, DESTE Foundation Project Space, Slaughterhouse, Hydra. Exhibition Duration: June 21 − September 30, 2016. Photo © Fanis Vlastaras & Rebecca Constantopoulou.

Visting Temenos was a fitting way to leave Greece. Days earlier, I'd read a Guardian article damning the Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center for its grandeur, questioning whether or not the state would be able to support such a thing (even though the foundation clearly stated in a recent press conference that it would be on hand in assisting the state in supporting the centre until it could run on its own). You might say that the text—as valid as its points are—discounts the fact that there are real efforts being made in how things move forward from here, despite the way in which crisis has come to effect society at every level, and even if these efforts are seemingly minimal. (The continuation of a visionary filmmakers' modus operandi, for instance, or the launch of a cultural centre like the SNCC, conceived pre-crisis, in the boom times, for better or for worse.)

Indeed, just as the experience of Temenos is not complete without hearing the sound of the projector wind down, seeing the screen go black, feeling the bite of the mosquitos at your ankles, and hearing Robert Beavers shout 'reel change' through the darkness, so the experience of Greece is not had without hope, or formal conviction, to balance things out. No matter how bad the odds, no matter how bleak the future.

—[O]



Image: Putiferio - A Project by Roberto Cuoghi. Performance, DESTE Foundation Project Space, Slaughterhouse, Hydra. Exhibition Duration: June 21 – September 30, 2016. Photo © Alessandra Sofia.

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THE HUFFINGTON POST

CultureZohn: The Deste Foundation: As Greece Struggles, The Private Sector Steps Up

06/23/2016 06:30 pm





Putiferio, by Roberto Cuoghi

The sun is just setting over the hot and scrubby island of Hydra and a sorcerer with a scarf and a helmet to protect him from the intense flames of a giant handmade kiln readies a giant pair of tongs to retrieve a fiery clay crustacean with the help of one of his two assistants with a golden apron (the women are both self-described as "girlfriends") to sprinkle it with clay dust in the ancient Japanese style and then bathe it in a giant cauldron of water. The process goes on for hours as the many kilns and fires form a kind of sacrifice to the Gods, on this, the eve of the summer solstice.

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Coughi after the performance

It is the annual retreat of the Deste Foundation ("to see"), founded by Greek-Cypriot industrial magnate Dakis Joannou, who himself modestly attired in a beige shirt stuck to his body in the intense heat, joins the international art-crowd arrayed above artist-sorcerer Italian Roberto Coughi—one of his favored artists— munching on cheese pies, corn on the cob, smoothies, and souvlaki. Despite the heat however and the saturation with art world eventing (Art Basel, Christo, Zurich, the annual June pilgrimages), all are transfixed by the smoke and fire pouring out of the kilns in the exhibit entitled Putiferio.

Double Double Toil and trouble fire burn and cauldron bubble is what comes to mind, the Shakespearean witches chant.

I am always on guard for pretention and artifice in the contemporary art world, the one upsmanship that so infects many of the events that now swirl around the once staid discipline. As with the Christo I am nervous that I am participant in something superfluous to the migrant and economic crises at hand.

Yet as the clay crabs and lobsters pile up, and the artist and his two partners work intensely the performance instead becomes very real and authentic, even charming, the friendly creatures snug in their dirt beds in afterbirth.

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Crustaceans in Slaughterhouse

In the ancient Slaughterhouse—the Deste site annually repurposed by each invited artist— down the craggy hill, the crustaceans creep, crawl, hang and attach themselves to walls and objects like a preschool full of wayward toddlers failing at conflict resolution more than a cadre of crabs off to their death. Yet on the roof of a cement hut below is what Coughi is calling the Crab Cemetery.



Crab Cemetery

The Huffington Post, June, 23, 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/patricia-zohn/culturezohn-the-deste-foundation-as-greece-struggles-the-private-sector-steps-

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Early the following morning Cuoghi, Duchamp-ian, and his assistants/amours are cleaning up and repairing the broken objects. In the light of day, they are less sorcerers and witches than tired artists who have committed to a physical, performative practice which has endeared me to them.



Coughi, the morning after

The questions about the role of artists vis a vis the role of the .001% does haunt me. Just as in the US, it is often private wealth that sustains many artists. What benefit these wealthy citizens derive in the competition for recognition for something other than their business acumen is different for each.

Joannou, a serious collector who impresses me as entirely authentic, has in his own way tried to bridge the gap. Passionate about art in a very sincere way, he has historically supported emerging—and blue chip artists— all over the world in their quest to make their art. That he also has an enormous Jeff Koons designed boat (called Guilty) that sits in the Hydra harbor is the flip side of his populist magnanimity. But I see that Joannou inspires both ingenues and veterans.

Maurizio Catalan, who has joined the retreat, says, "I believe that to get in touch with Dakis it's a milestone in an artist's life; he's a sharp-witted person and really open minded, and at the same time very straightforward, he won't say he likes what he doesn't."

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Joannou boat Guilty designed by Jeff Koons

Yet his flourish and show are probably not that different from the highly decorated war heroes whose display of arms, trophy medallions and sumptuous costume at the local history museum testify to Hydra's long standing home as a preserve of wealth and bounty from its role in the ancient lucrative shipping trade. Even further back, Bard professor Daniel Mendelsohn says," the great aristocratic families of an earlier era in the city's history continued to hold and to covet power... Pericles, for instance, belonged to a family that might well be compared to the Vanderbilts or the Rockefellers of a later age". Greece is now home to many foundations that contribute to contemporary art and artists in a meaningful way and Joannou is leading the pack.

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Donkey parade at the port of Hydra

In counterpoint to the pyrotechnics on the island, 33 young Greek artists have been meticulously selected by curators Gary Carrion-Murayari, Helga Christofferson and Massimiliano Gioni from the New Museum in New York in a collaborative art project, The Equilibrists, with support from the Deste at the newer branch of the Benaki. From over 500 submissions and 100 studio visits, they have culled these native artists who—though not all living in Greece— have faced down the economic challenges which are particularly piercing in this country which is falling off a fiscal cliff.



Installation view, Deste Foundation/New Museum/Benaki Museum, The Equilibrists

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The artists in turn have marshaled resources, supporting each other on video productions, engaging with start up galleries, forming collectives, eager to not be marginalized by the perilous straits they find themselves in. A National Museum of Contemporary Art still has an iron construction fence around though it was supposedly finished more than two years ago.

Though there is pathos, despite the challenges, there is also humor aplenty in the Deste/Benaki/New Museum exhibition. Especially engaging are the ersatz tent cities of Yannis Karpouzis, the Jetsons-like video attempts of Orestis Mavroudis to fly, the meticulous updating of the traditional art of Greek embroidery by Zoi Gaitanidou, the unstretched canvases of Sofia Stevi, the accumulations of a life by Giorgos Gerontides and the printed feminist t-shirts by Eleni Bagaki (entitled with singular precision, Tears made his dick hard/He made me drink from the floor/For his birthday I fucked somebody else/In my bedroom it must be hard to be you)

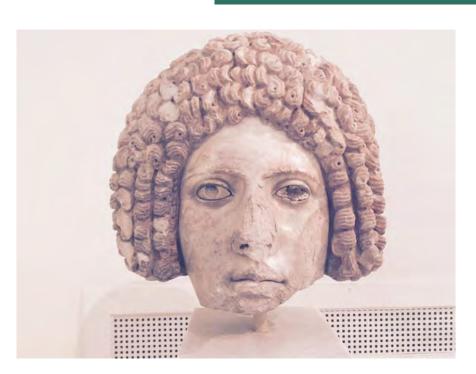


Installation view, Deste Foundation/New Museum/Benaki Museum, The Equilibrists

Lisa Phillips, director of the New Museum whose previous collaboration with Dakis Joannou came under scrutiny because of his seat on her board (this exhibition will not travel to New York), says, "Athens could be the new Berlin," e.g affordable, congenial to artists in the face of the distinctly harsh economic and political challenges. Curator Christofferson reminds me that I shouldn't "romanticize what's going on with the artists, that this self-organization and solidarity comes out of need." A bit of hopeful news is that a site of the art exhibition Documenta 14 will take place in Athens next year. That women curators, gallerists and artists have an important role in the exhibition is another hopeful sign.

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Female mask, 1st century AD

A one-day kamikaze visit to the historic Athens museums reminds of the ancient tradition of portrayals of strong women throughout Greek mythology. At the Acropolis Museum, there is an "Athena" path one can follow as she battles alongside her serpent, the Korai (maidens) who serve and Caryatids supporting the pediments on their heads have pride of place; at the Anthropological Museum the vast holdings are overwhelming but I make my way through the centuries of gold and marble, passing alas, in a somewhat forlorn corner, after all the brouhaha over its return to the Greek patrimony, the vase of American collector Shelby White. One mini sculpture from the storage vaults looks remarkably like Fischli/Weiss.



Ancient Fischli/Weiss

At the Benaki Museum (original branch), the women's costumes are highly embroidered and layered and the jewelry at every stage of Greek history is modern and magnificent. Even at the Hydra historical museum, the polychrome heads of women are prominently displayed amidst the male, military splendor.

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Terracotta sphinx, 630 BC

Bastienne Schmidt, a German /Greek artist who lives in New York says, "Women were put on a pedestal but not part of the official public life, they were constrained to the house. I think Greek women are very strong, and they run the villages. But still, men go to the kafenion, (and hang out and have coffee and chat) and the women must stay at home." Certainly female Greek artists are not succumbing to ancient tradition.

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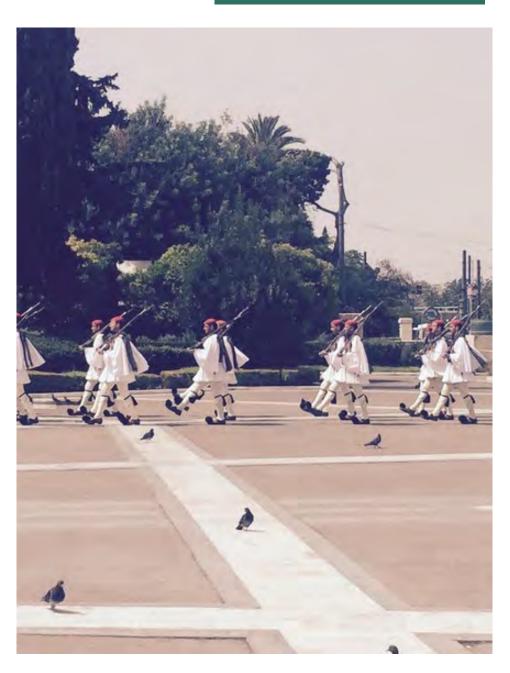


Cycladic Museum

At the Cycladic museum, after seeing more extraordinary sculptures of women, I pause at a sidebar to his own exhibit Ai Wei Wei has curated to bring attention to the refugee crisis on Lesbos with a display of the work mostly amateur photographers who have documented the thousands of families risking the perilous journey to safety and freedom. Ai has also made a wallpaper of selfies with the refugees as his contribution. Artists themselves are not exempt from my antennae.

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Changing of the Guard at the Parliament building

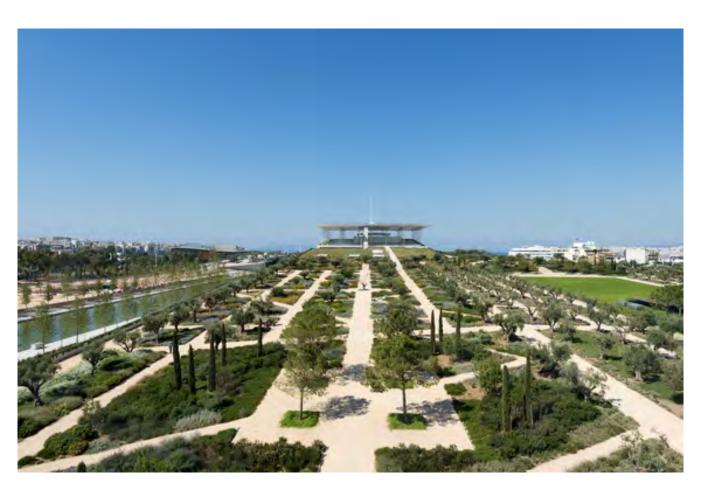
At the changing of the guard at the Parliament where soldiers wear their wool leggings and pom-pommed shoes and fesi hats even in the crushing heat, their long swords raised high in salute, I am reminded that the Greek government also has understood that they can rely on their antiquities for only so long and must embrace the new.

Dakis Joannou is not thus attired. But in a way, I feel he is a major general proudly sending forth young artist-warriors into the world—Hydrated via the Deste Foundation— so they don't end up in an artists' version of the crab cemetery.

Galerie Chantal Crouse $http://www.huffingtonpost.com/patricia-zohn/culturezohn-the-deste-foundation-as-greece-struggles-the-private-sector-steps-up_b_10624916.html$

THE HUFFINGTON POST

Both The Equilibrists and Putiferio will be on display throughout the summer

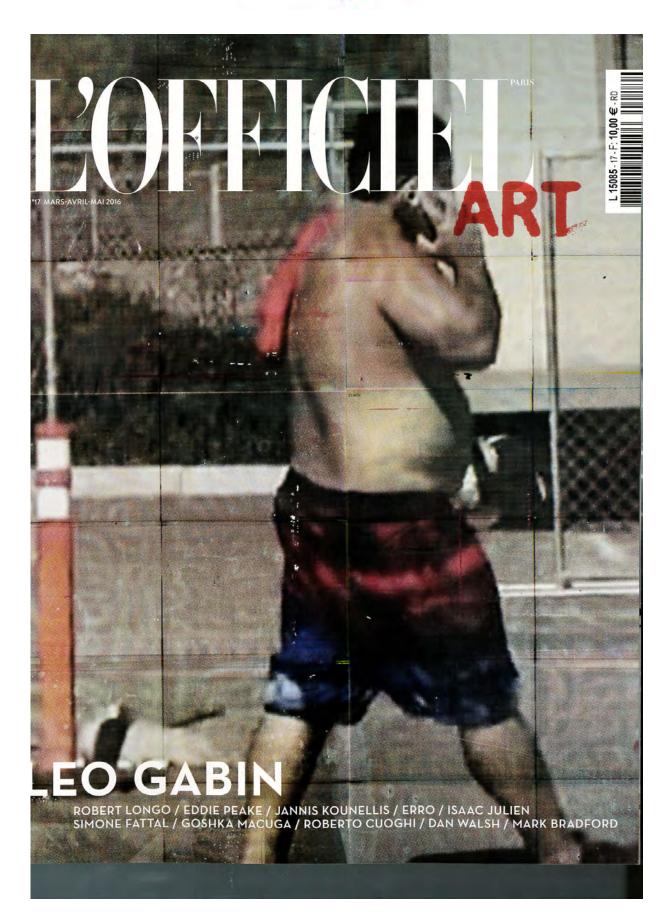


Stavros Niarchos Foundation and Park designed by Renzo Piano and Deborah Nevins

(At the last minute, I was able to tour the new massive Renzo Piano project for the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center scheduled to open officially in about a year, including the National Library, the National Opera on land donated by government from former Olympic site. Another private project which is being gifted to the state is temporarily opening its graceful mediterranean park by American landscape designer Deborah Nevins for a public—impatient to partake of this bounty— for four days. Inevitably, and not without some local controversy, culture has taken pride of place. In time, I'll have updated information)

Galerie Chantal Crouse



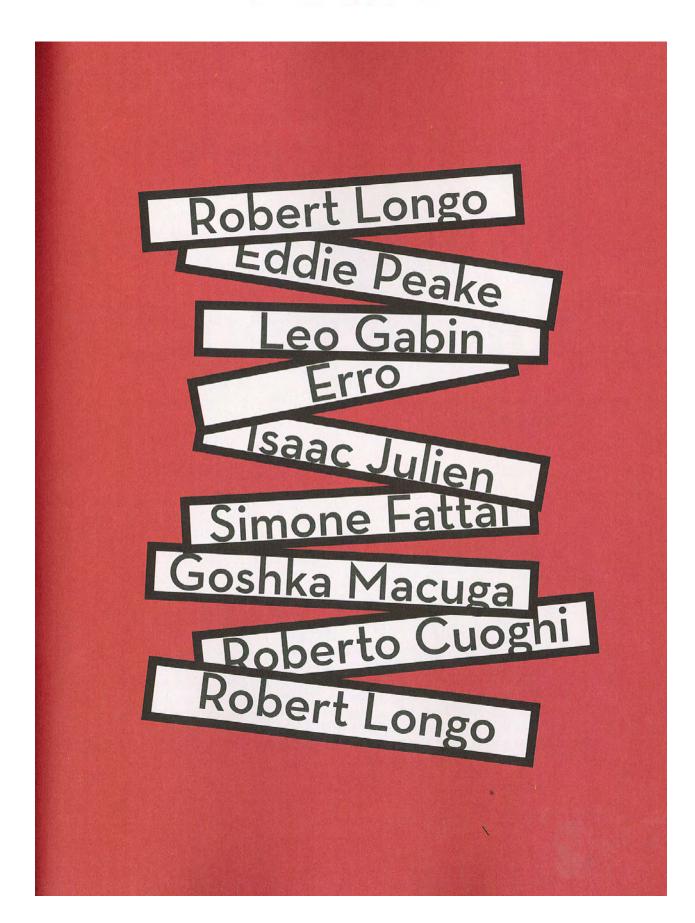


LOFFICIE

EXHIBITION ON PAPER: "Dystopie"

58 HYPERRÉALISME : ROBERT LONGO. 72 EXPLICIT : EDDIE PEAKE. 86 COVER STORY : LEO GABIN.
100 ERRO : PICTURE SHOW. 110 1 ARTISTE, 1 ŒUVRE : ISAAC JULIEN.
116 FRAGMENTS : SIMONE FATTAL. 124 RÉFLECTIONS : GOSHKA MACUGA.
136 ART GÉNÉTIQUEMENT MODIFIÉ : ROBERTO CUOGHI.







EXHIBITION ON PAPER

ALCHIMIE

Art génétiquement modifié

ROBERTO CUOGHI À L'ŒUVRE

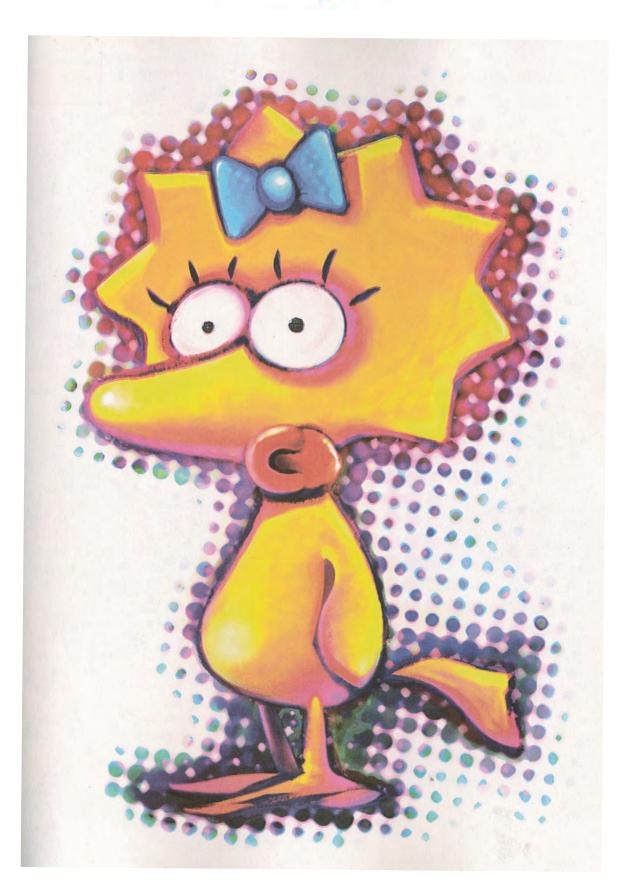
Roberto Cuoghi est représenté par les galeries Chantal Crousel (Paris) et Lehmann Maupin (New York).

Roberto Cuoghi présentera une exposition au Slaughterhouse/Deste Foundation sur l'île d'Hydra à l'été 2016. Pour plus d'informations: deste.gr/hydra

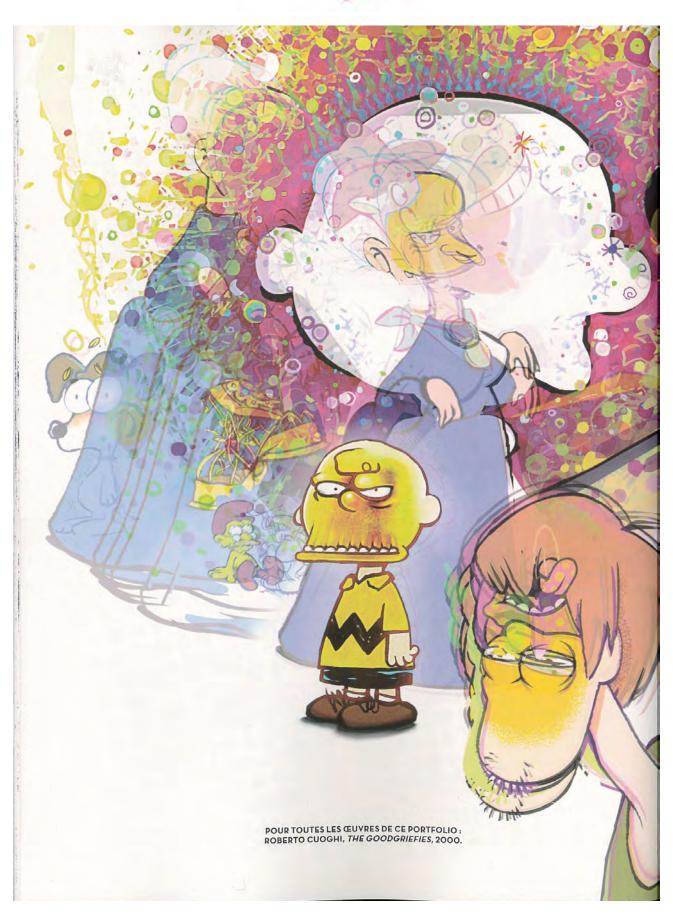
Rien ne se perd, rien ne se crée, tout se transforme. Robert Cuoghi puise sa matière artistique première dans le monde qui nous entoure. Il transforme la réalité, observe ses gênes, en améliore certains, en élimine d'autres. A travers son œuvre, il dresse une réflexion sur l'identité, sur l'hybridation, une réflexion sur l'art aussi. Roberto Cuoghi est un chimiste. Il puise dans la culture populaire comme il puiserait dans l'ADN pour y rechercher ce qui est susceptible de le satisfaire, lui apporter les mutations voulues, lui injecter des stupéfiants. Le résultat est un être hybride et inquiétant, qui mêle une pluralité de références aux dessins animés et aux cartoons. Il les assemble, les manipule, les contorsionne, dans une alchimie qui, étrangement, opère

parfaitement, comme si ces personnages avaient été créés à partir de formes universelles ou issues d'une inter-influence créatrice. Conglutinés les uns aux autres, ils semblent évoluer dans un monde parallèle à l'enfance, psychédélique et dérangeant. Roberto Cuoghi travaille sur le thème de la métamorphose depuis ses débuts, lorsqu'à l'âge de 25 ans, il prit l'apparence et les gestes d'un vieil homme, son père. Fasciné par la culture assyrienne, il réalisa une reproduction gigantesque d'une amulette apotropaïque en bronze exposée au Louvre représentant Pazuzu, dieu autant redouté qu'idolâtré. Les dessins présentés dans les pages de L'Officiel Art sont issus de la série The Goodgriefies.

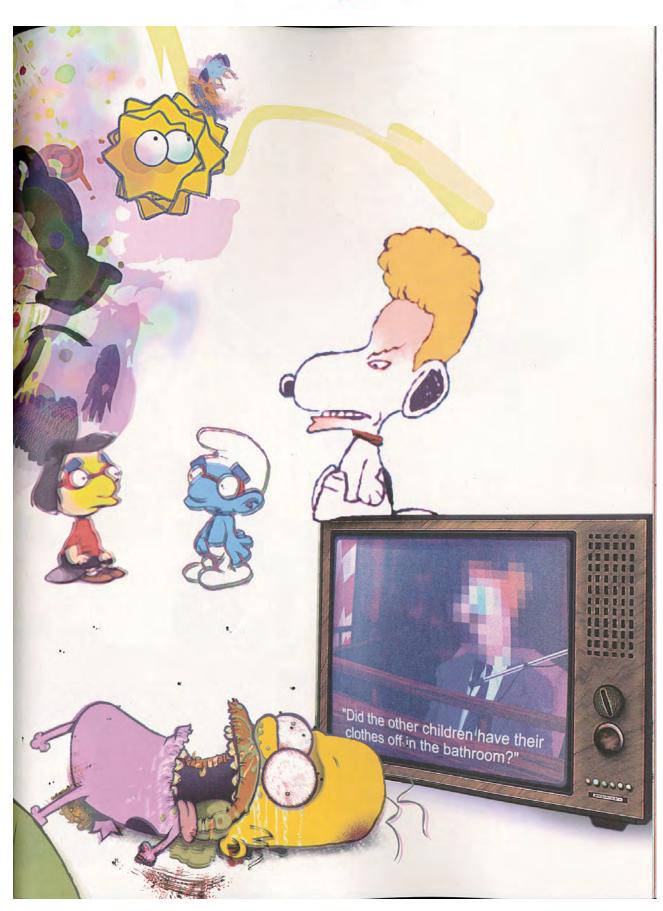








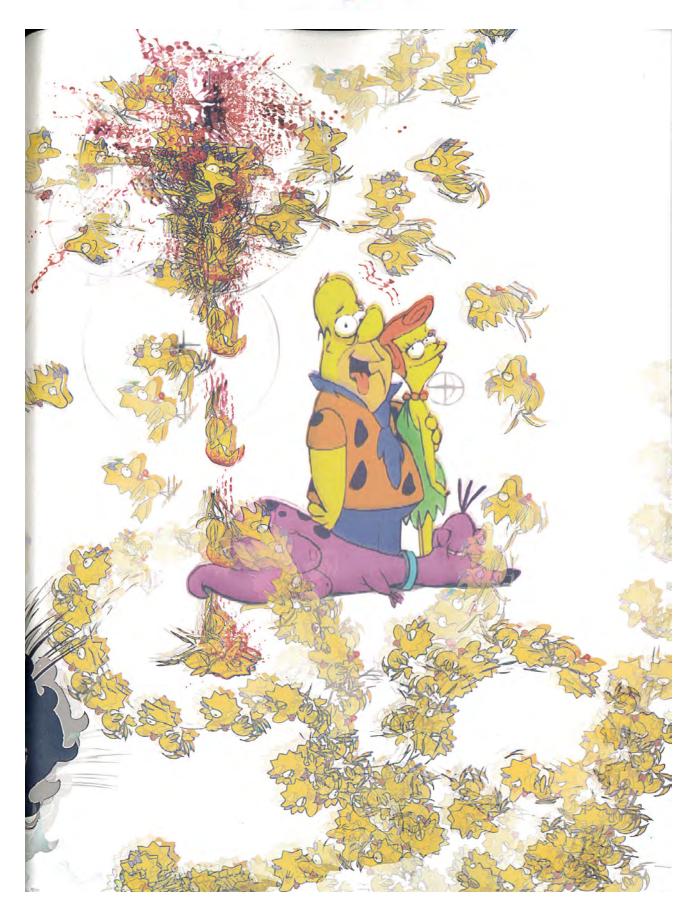




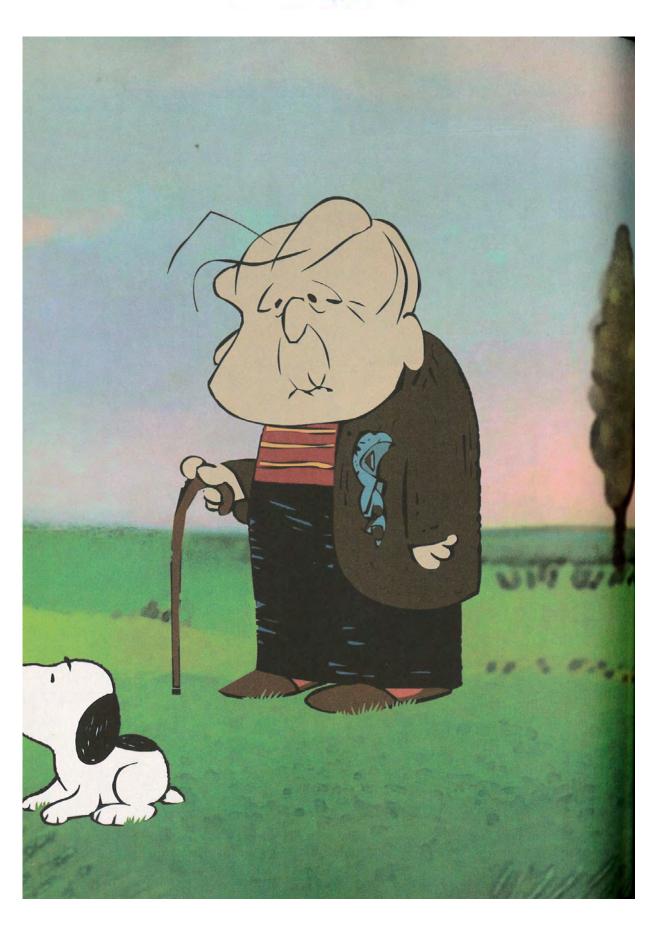














Roberto Cuoghi, The Goodgriefies

Par Seungduk Kim

Milo Manara a commencé à publier Il gioco (Le Déclic) en 1983.

[Le premier tome met en scène une belle femme dépourvue de passion, mariée à un homme riche plus âgé qu'elle. La femme est enlevée par un scientifique qui lui implante dans le cerveau un dispositif radio-commandé qui, lorsqu'il est activé, la rend sexuellement insatiable.]

En février 1785 le chimiste français Antoine Lavoisier prononce la célèbre formule : "Rien ne se perd, rien ne se crée, tout se transforme."

En 1824, un autre chimiste français, Sadi Carnot, établit les lois de la thermodynamique. Leur deuxième principe énonce que tout système isolé tend naturellement à dégénérer en un état de désordre plus grand.

En 1974, musée de Lucerne, Suisse : ouverture de "Transformer", exposition désormais culte de Jean-Christophe Ammann.

La publicité du célèbre gainer musculaire
Mutant Mass" proclame : "Laissez l'humanité
derrière vous." Etre MUTANT signifie être
anormal. Vous êtes concentré et motivé.
Tel un possédé, vous vous efforcez de soulever
chaque jour des poids surhumains. Vous
refusez absolument de rester dans la moyenne.
Vous exigez le meilleur. Et vos exigences
nutritionnelles sont tout aussi anormales –
vous êtes un MUTANT.

Cuoghi l'était et ne l'était pas, Tout est humain. Déformé. Milo Manara started to publish Il gioco
(The Click) from 1983.
[The first volume features an attractive but
passionless woman, who is married
to an older, rich man. After she is abducted by
a scientist and a remote-controlled
device is surgically implanted into her brain,
its activation makes her become
sexually insatiable.]

February 1785
French chemist Antoine Lavoisier puts
the famous line:
"Nothing is lost, nothing is created,
everything is transformed".

In 1824, another French chemist Sadi Carnot sets up the laws of the thermodynamics: The second laws states that there is a natural tendency of any isolated system to degenerate into a more distorted state.

In 1974, Luzern, Switzerland, the museum opened Transformer a now-cult show curated by Jean Christophe Ammann.

The famous muscle mass gainer Mutant
MassTM states in its commercial: Leave
humanity behind.
To be MUTANT means being abnormal.
You are focused and driven. You strive to lift
super human weights every day,
like a man possessed. You simply will not
settle for average. You demand the best.
And your nutrient demands are just as
abnormal — you are MUTANT.

Cuoghi was and wasn't. It's all about human. Distorted.

COFFICIE



SIMONE FATTAL

Après des études de philosophie à Beyrouth et à la Sorbonne, Simone Fattal (née à Damas et élevée au Liban) se destine à la peinture puis, principalement, à la sculpture. Fuyant la guerre civile dans son pays, elle s'installe en Californie pour y fonder la maison d'édition The Post-Apollo Press, publiant notamment des récits féministes. Invitée à investir les pages de L'Officiel Art, elle présente un grand collage inédit.



ROBERTO CUOGHI

Artiste originaire de Molène, en Italie, Roberto Cuoghi (né en 1973) pratique aussi bien la peínture, la sculpture, le dessin que l'animation et les installations sonores. Ses œuvres ont été présentées à la Biennale de Venise, au Palazzo Grassi ou encore au Musée d'art contemporain de Chicago. Dans ce numéro, sont mis à l'honneur ses dessins hybrides inspirés des figures de la culture populaire.



GUILLERMO KUITCA

Né à Buenos Aires en 1961, Guillermo Kuitca réinvente entièrement schémas, plans d'architecture et cartes topographiques grâce à la peinture.

Il a représenté l'Argentine à la Biennale de Venise en 2007, et a également exposé dans plusieurs institutions prestigieuses à travers le monde : Metropolitan Museum of Art de New York, Tate Modern de Londres, ou Fondation Cartier. Dans ce numéro, ses œuvres entrent en dialogue avec un texte d'Etel Adnan.



LES INVITÉS



ETEL ADNAN

Poète et artiste, Etel Adnan est née à Beyrouth en 1925. Après des études à la Sorbonne et aux Etats-Unis, elle enseigne la philosophie en Californie avant de se consacrer à la peinture et à l'écriture. Figure importante dans son pays d'origine comme en France et aux Etats-Unis, elle publie en 1978 Sitt Marie Rose, l'un de ses romans les plus connus. A l'invitation de L'Officiel Art, elle rédige un texte inspiré d'une œuvre de l'artiste argentin Guillermo Kuitca.

DESIGN

COLUMN

Keywords



ROBERTO CUOGHI



Una foto dell'artista da bambino nei panni della madre, 1981.

L'esercito aveva perso un uomo. "Non era prigioniero, ma neanche autorizzato, difatti non era mai successo", mi disse il colonnello Sabotino. Un giorno si presentarono i carabinieri a casa e io non c'ero. Ero a Milano e vicino al Palazzo di Giustizia c'era un timbrificio, mi presentai con il nominativo di una cardiologa, partita iva, indirizzo, numero di telefono e in due giorni avevo anche il ricettario».

02 UN DOCUMENTO MILITARE. DISERZIONE E TRASFORMAZIONE.

«Mano sul cuore, l'esercito mi chiese di tornare a Bologna per confessare: "non sono orfano di entrambi i genitori e non ho insufficienze somatico-funzionali, non svolgo attività di volontariato, non ho niente da obiettare. Mi piacciono le divise, le armi e la guerra, poi non credo in Dio e non appartengo a nessun

gruppo di opposizione". L'ufficio di leva mi chiedeva un motivo per la mia renitenza e io non l'avevo, esattamente come loro non avevano motivi di chiedere la mia ottemperanza. Ero portato per le discipline basate su esperienze astratte, non avrei saputo aspettare il mio turno per strisciare sotto gli ostacoli. Passai all'attenzione dell'arma dei Carabinieri. In attesa di un processo, non avrei più avuto diritto di espatrio, non avrei più avuto un passaporto e rischiavo il carcere per disertori, l'unico a disposizione, a Bari. Mi assegnarono un assistente sociale che non si è mai presentato: dovevo essere rintracciabile entro ventiquattro ore. Comprai una segreteria del telefono. Con le mie ricette, gli psicoanalettici costavano poco più di diecimila lire, mentre ai fuori corso in Statale, ai regolari e ai figli di papà costavano dieci volte di più e la mia segreteria

lampeggiava come quella di un ricercato. Nel 2001 arrivò il congedo e l'esonero dal servizio civile; rinnovai i documenti, anche perché nel frattempo ero invecchiato più del colonnello Sabotino. L'esonero è a firma Guido Bertolaso, lo scopro adesso perché è per quest'occasione che ho chiesto a mia madre di spedirmi le carte, che vedo ora per la prima volta».

03 UNA LETTERA MAI SCRITTA.

«Tra i benefici di ritardo per motivi di studio e qualche raccomandata di convocazione alla stazione dei Carabinieri, c'è la copia di una lettera che ho spedito alla caserma, ma che non ho mai scritto. È uno pseudo-epigrafo di mia madre, la quale ha prodotto una mia dichiarazione e, senza troppo mestiere, ha falsificato la firma. Un reato che scopro dopo diciannove anni».

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/23/arts/design/aural-installations-take-over-new-museum.html?_r=2

The New York Times

Sounds of All but Silence Aural Installations Take Over New Museum

ROBERTA SMITH MAY 22, 2014

The New Museum is alive with the sound of music, as well as talking, chanting, spitting, electronic tics and sputters and, occasionally, the tinkling of 47 small bronze bells. Its six current exhibitions all involve sound. One is almost nothing but sound. This loose, fluctuating connection illuminates some of the many roles sound plays in contemporary art while allowing the shows to, well, amplify one another in unexpected ways. It also mitigates the museum's dark, awkwardly proportioned galleries.

Few confluences of shows in this building have worked together so well. Overseen by Massimiliano Gioni, the museum's director of exhibitions, the shows reflect the efforts of the bulk of its curatorial staff: Gary Carrion-Murayari, Margot Norton, Johanna Burton and Helga Christoffersen.

Roberto Cuoghi's sound installation on the third floor travels deep into history. Far from the familial intimacy and familiar musicality of Mr. Kjartansson's, it is nonetheless personal and aurally encompassing, and also something of an immersive brain teaser. You walk through a narrow hallway into a round, nearly pitch-black chamber and an amazing vortex of irresistible, emotionally charged if not slightly hair-raising noise and music: Fragments of melodies mix with various drums, bells and pipes, mournful cries, anxious squeaks, and gibberish, as well as rattles and gongs. The sounds swirl about the cavelike space. You're in the middle of a mad corral of people, creatures and spirits. Perhaps because Mr. Cuoghi is Italian, you may liken the experience to watching a Fellini movie blindfolded, but a Disney animation run amok seems equally pertinent.

The wall text — best read after going through the piece — explains everything, which turns out to be completely in keeping with Mr. Cuoghi's strange, obsessive sensibility. Starting in 1998, in his mid-20s, he spent several years becoming his father — that is, dressing and maintaining the sedentary lifestyle of a much older man — and succeeded enough to develop geriatric health problems.

The "Suillakku Corral" involves a similarly idiosyncratic pursuit and surrender. It is a choral lament for the fall of Nineveh, the ancient Assyrian capital — or as close as Mr. Cuoghi could come to what might have been performed in Assyria around 612 B.C. To achieve this effect, he spent several years researching Assyrian culture and language, creating authentic handmade musical instruments, writing music and filling in whatever gaps arose with his own imagination. (The wall label lists 73 instruments, from the esoteric — tanbur and santoor — to a badminton racket and a twig brush that simply filled a need.)

The New york Times



A short view of Mr. Cuoghi's sound installation. By Byron Smith on Publish Date May 22, 2014.

Mr. Cuoghi then played and sang all the parts of his corral — or chorale — and assembled the recordings into an ensemble performance. Instead of becoming his father, he became an archaeologist, anthropologist, musicologist, instrument maker, multitalented musician and, finally, sound engineer. "Suillakku Corral" is among the best works of contemporary art currently on view in a New York museum.

expos



exorcismes

Au Consortium, à Dijon, Roberto Cuoghi livre une exposition ensorcelante placée sous le signe monstrueux du dieu démoniaque Pazuzu.

e nom de Pazuzu paraîtra familier aux adorateurs de L'Exorciste.

Dans le film de William Friedkin, c'est lui, le démon assyrien du vent, qui revient habiter le corps de la fillette et la rendre difforme. Toute l'exposition de Roberto Cuoghi travaille de même à déformer les représentations de Pazuzu, ou plutôt l'une d'entre elles, une amulette conservée au Louvre, où le démon apparaît le regard féroce, pattes griffues et

dos ailé. L'Italien la transfère par ordinateur en 3D sur des polystyrènes, qu'il enduit ensuite de résine et peint à l'aérographe de noirs brillants ou de gris éléphant.

Les statues peuvent être immenses et, éclairées dramatiquement, ménagent leur petit effet terrifiant, même si la silhouette de la bête, engluée dans la matière, crevassée, mousseuse parfeis, du fait des réactions de la résine, est à peine reconnaissable. D'autres versions, plus petites, arborent une facture d'une belle préciosité, mélant le bois, la corne ou l'os. Si bien que le fétiche pourrait remonter à Mathusalem.

Au fond, les pièces n'ont pas d'age, et surement pas celui de l'art contemporain. Cela participe de l'étrangeté radicale du show, et rappelle que l'un des projets de Roberto Cuoghi fut, durant des années, de ressembler à son père. En 1998, à 25 ans, le jeune homme se met à se vétir en vieil homme, prend du poids, se laisse pousser une longue barbe, chausse d'épaisses lunettes à verres fumés et se déplace en adoptant un pas de sénateur. Devenir un autre que soi, mais le même, en inversant l'ordre de la transmission, puisque c'est son père qu'il devient.

Ce sont des histoires de famille, d'identité donc, que tord encore Cuoghi dans sa série de portraits intitulée Asincroni, des espèces de morphings picturaux qui brassent son propre visage et celui des membres de sa famille. Les faces sont boursouflées, violacées, résultat de l'altération à l'acétate des couches de peinture ou des photographies. Ce sont donc des portraits gâchés et plus du tout crachés, mais pas ratés non plus. Portraits plutôt de la déprise de soi, de la dépersonnalisation dans une recherche poussée à bout de la filiation.

L'exposition cultive enfin les formes monstrueuses, grotesques et cryptomythologiques, pour permettre à l'artiste d'échapper, non seulement à lui-même, mais aussi à toute lignée artistique. Il n'est sürement pas un héritier de l'arte povera par exemple, ce que, pourtant, parce qu'il est Italien, on aurait volontiers essayer de placer.

En 2008, pendant deux ans, il a étudié, au point d'en devenir un spécialiste, les langues et les rituels assyriens. Et c'est de là que ces travaux viennent donc : d'une forme de dérèglement des formes, de la chronologie de l'histoire de l'art et de soi-même. Possédé par l'esprit de Pazuzu, Roberto Cuoghi s'est en même temps dépossédé de tout le lourd bagage, théorique et formel, de l'artiste contemporain. Une forme d'autoexorcisme. Judicaël Lavrador

Roberto Cuoghi *Ba Ida e Pingala a Ida e Ida e Pingala e Pingala* jusqu'au 11 janvier
au Consortium, Dijon, 16L 03 80 68 45 55,
leconsortium,fr

96 les inrockapitéles 5.11.2014

FINANCIAL TIMES

Kjartansson/Henrot/Cuoghi, New Museum, New York – review

Ariella Budick June 3, 2014

Before its latest tripartite blockbuster opened, the New Museum dispatched an advance guard of verbiage: three volumes' worth of interviews and interpretations that reduced the work of Ragnar Kjartansson, Camille Henrot and Roberto Cuoghi to a series of desiccated abstractions. Having done the dispiriting homework of reading this stuff, I was thoroughly unprepared for the volcanic magic of the installations themselves – all those overlapping rainbows of sound and light, that sensual and sometimes terrifying spectacle. Conceptual art so often boils down to a dense paragraph of explanatory text that actually seeing it can feel superfluous. But in this synched trio of shows, orchestrated by Massimiliano Gioni, prose withered to insignificance in a total environment of shamanistic beauty and sensual power.

Roberto Cuoghi may be the trio's ablest wizard. A guard with a torch guided me through black curtains into "Suillakku Corral", a lightless enclosure where I was bombarded by almost unendurable cacophony. Echoes of songs, the violent beating of drums, spasmodic shrieks, whistles, groans, lamentations – all assaulted me in the artificial night, an uncanny force of hundreds, joined in a frantic and desperate chorale.

A text outside this chamber of discord explained that "Suillakku Corral" is meant to evoke Nineveh in the seventh century BC, when the Assyrian empire was teetering into ruin. Cuoghi has channelled the grief and fear of a dying civilisation into sounds made by an army of instruments, many of which he built by hand. Although he immersed himself in intensive research into the ancient Near East, authenticity is not the point: Cuoghi supplements such traditional instruments as the tanbur and the bamboo flute with bronze cowbells, badminton rackets, windblown leaves and Mexican beans. Like Henrot and Kjartansson, Cuoghi has fashioned a phantasmagoria of social science and spirituality, a ritual of exquisite overload.

Until June 29, newmuseum.org



THE TUMOUR SET FREE



Roberto Cuoghi

The good surgeon, operating on a patient suffering from a nasty cancer, promised to himself he would do everything that had to be done, and so he operated and the tumour was removed in textbook fashion, in full and without leaving any trace behind. After thinking deeply about the need to be on his guard against false appearances, and out of an enthusiasm that rose from his heart, the good surgeon decided to make a radical choice. And this is what he chose; the patient was thrown away and he took satisfaction in the fact that the tumour had finally been set free.



Explanations being due, there is no need on this occasion to unify space and time or weights and measures. It is better instead to take one's mind off things and overlook the sense of proportion, lose sight of the relationship between the parts and the much vaunted overall view, which here is to be forgotten or left at home, in order to expect with loving insistence even the most unlucky accident.

Imagining that we are coming closer to a perspective of common sense from which to look at the question, we misunderstand precisely the sense from the opposite perspective and without believing it wrong.



Before making hasty judgements about the surgeon's perverse choice, let us allow ourselves to weigh up the motives of one of the parties involved, the much defamed cancer, rather than those of the person, always too young, at the moment he finds himself dumped on the rubbish heap. First of all, a bit of professional advice on the elements of the conflict shows the cancerous cell to be part of the patient himself, i.e. not extraneous and therefore having a right to its own structural definition. What marks the cell in question is Hyperdynamism; it suffers from Ataxia, a sinful disorder. Nevertheless it is free enterprise and nothing else that controls what is being defended here, an impulse acquired from a system conspiring against self-determination. A system that pursues self-sufficiency, since, as system, its sole prerogative and faith is conformity. However, the original cell, alone and victim of an organic revolution, instrument of its destiny, embarked on the tumorous process, attesting at every moment to its own truth. The fatal prognosis is only the result of energetic resistance to the whole organism being branded with heresy. If the cohesion that guarantees life is a condition of morality, cohesion is moral because it is moral to encourage cooperative behaviour for the living whole.



Cohesion brings order, and order is better than disorder and conflict. Well, the tumour is the most effective Ambassador of these facts too, through the well-known offence of its infiltratory growth that exploits vascularisation to obtain nourishment and new possibilities for proliferation. Its defence is a blind one orchestrated in the desperation of life as the most elementary principle, in an accidental endowment of a degree of determination and incontestable strategies, as well as in the claim of unintentionality. The neoplastic process is proliferation without an end, without any aim other than growth.

Persevering despite its numerical disadvantage, in the teeth of an entire system of immunosurveillance, the accused cell has therefore won by right; so the assumption of guilt on the part of the neoplastic process seems to be wholly unfounded. Any blame is to be shared with the cofactors that intervene during the phases of initiation and promotion of the carcinogenesis, factors that

undoubtedly precede the appearance of the cancerous unit and that, consequently, testify in its favour. Making a charge of attempted murder would mean carrying a motion not supported by the evidence. In making an attempt on the life of its host, the developing tumour is attacking itself.

The only accusation that cannot be rejected is that of not being viable, but it is a formal and not substantive charge, de facto a characteristic like any other. In confirmation of and accordance with the principles of law and the principles of morality, although universally accepted and sweepingly applied, the attempt to prefer the patient to his disease finds no corroboration here. It is a gloomy, dark idea and founded on false premises that only serve to foster the prevailing conventionalism. All responsibility should be ascribed to so-called environmental factors, to the patient's habits in relation to carcinogenic agents, as well as to endogenous factors, to spontaneous mutations stemming from occasional flaws in the process of copying the genetic code.



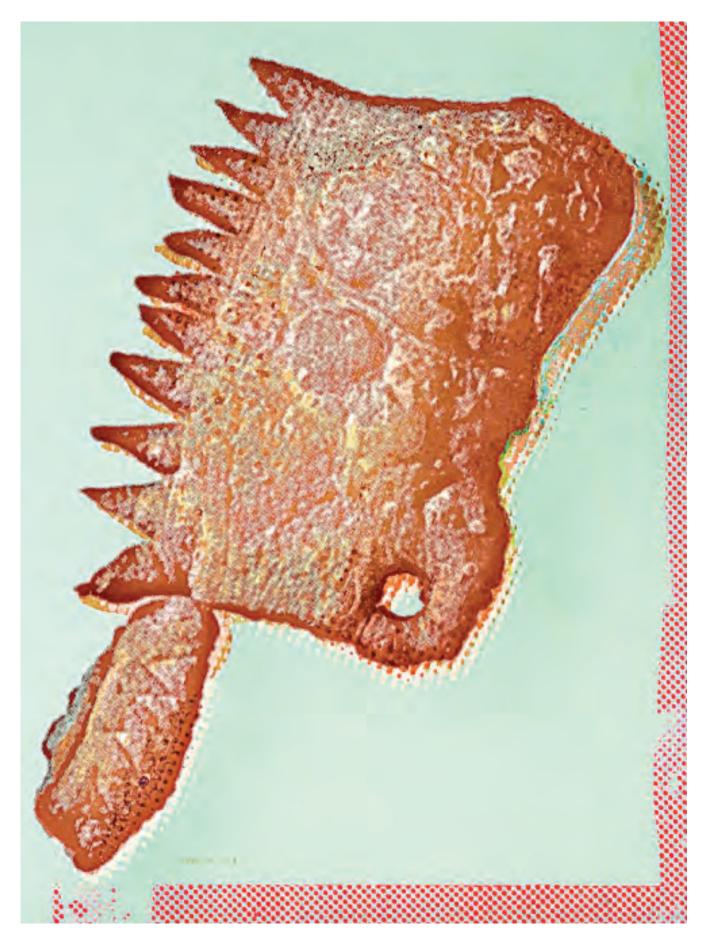


In this connection, going back to the very essence of the role of the cellular genetic matrix, an analysis of the rules of conduct with regard to the ethical position maintained toward the host organism has no probative significance.



This is the essential point: every somatic cell contains nonpathogenic oncogenes, predisposed however to bring about neoplastic change, a characteristic and not a stigma, that implies the possibility of a gain. Not only is the aberration present, but its significance is even more noble if we look at it in evolutionary terms. All progress comes from the tested error, given concrete expression. If we were not to accept the possibility of error we would have to renounce the basic principle of the evolutionary process, condemning ourselves to a stasis that would not be adaptive and thus would, over time, become involutional. However, in the modesty of the requests, the defence does not wish to undermine justice.

No one has been treacherously stripped of the privilege of immortality, and there is no doubt that the cancerous initiative is the manifestation of a necessary evil, without merits except for itself. The deleterious information does not damage the germ line, i.e. it has no effect on the next generation: in other words this is the story of an impulsive exploit that, if it were not for the lack of mental capacity, would have the heroic character of sacrifice for a most noble cause.



Roberto Cuoghi. The Rules of Vision

Anamorphosis in the Eyes

Marcella Beccaria Anno 2 Numero 6 aprile-maggio 2010

Cuoghi takes away my eyes and compels me to use his. This is neither a joke nor an equivocal game—rather, it's what happens every time I encounter one of his creations. His work acquires meaning the instant when my vision changes, when my gaze is replaced by an alien one and other eyes—the artist's—become mine.

It has an innocent look; there are even children in it. But when I put on the glasses that Cuoghi has given me, my head spins. Kinderama (2010), the artist's latest project, is based on a series of stereoscopic images. Founded on the principle of binocular vision, which is what allows us to judge distances and proportions correctly, the procedure involves taking two photographs almost simultaneously, but sliding the camera along a fixed ruled bar. The two pictures look very similar to the naked eye, but seen with the aid of a special viewer, the images fuse, creating the illusion of depth. Nothing new about that, some will say, perhaps thinking of those small optical devices capable of conveying the magic of St. Mark's Square covered with pigeons. And yet, precisely because stereoscopic viewers usually present panoramas of squares and monuments, the entire Kinderama operation takes on significance as soon as you realize that this kind of vision, a sort of low-cost special effect, has been applied instead to a well-known and wealthy private collection. And so it is that, looked at with Cuoghi's eyes—those eyes that have suddenly become my own—famous works by Jeff Koons, Robert Gober, Maurizio Cattelan and many others become the novel playground of a group of smiling and overexcited children.



Kinderama 2010 courtesy the artist

A world of fluctuating, amusing, captivating, but also slightly repellent illusion, Kinderama makes you think. While the eyes wander and plumb the depth of the 3D image, the mind responds to the retinal stimulus and starts to see, in its turn, hypothetical metaphors, similes and personifications. Perhaps it is not just a toy... And so what is it? In search of a meaning, you suddenly feel that what you have in your hands is a sort of microscope capable of revealing the secrets of a colony of multiplying bacteria. In that child posing as the Incredible Hulk in front of the picture by Koons, you seem to recognize a familiar scene... perhaps some gallery owner flexing the muscles of his power. And that group of cheerful children dancing in the glare of the light that illuminates Cattelan's horse? Don't they remind you of a group of curators clinging to the luminous tail of some shooting star of the art scene? And those poor wretches in the work in the shape of a cage? They're not by any chance like the people who, wanting desperately to belong to the world of art, end up being imprisoned by it? One image even shows a delightful little girl turning her hands upside down and pretending they are glasses. "A window open onto the world of art" declares a smart art slogan these days... In the end, we like Cuoghi precisely because he sees monsters and puts them everywhere.

I put down Kinderama, take back my eyes and start to think about Cuoghi's other works. I leaf through his catalogue in my mind. Here they are, in chronological order. First, Cuoghi's self-portrait Il Coccodeista (1997) (a play on words in which the Italian word for "cackle" takes the place of "cube" or "future"), a confused avant-gardist who lived on pills, spurning showers, combs and changes of clothing. Once again, my eyes are not my own; the self-portraits and sheets of text that make up the series imply a new substitution of the gaze. Cuoghi was a student at the Accademia di Brera in Milan when he had the idea of taking an exam by altering his own already disorderly life. He spent days wearing a pair of welder's goggles whose lenses had been replaced by Peckham prisms, which have the curious optical property of inverting and reversing the vision, so that whatever is above appears on the bottom and whatever is to the right changes place with the left. All that remains of this experiment is the series called Il Coccodeista. Looking at these works on paper gives a clear idea of the world that the artist saw around him at that time. We don't need a psychologist to tell us that it was a claustrophobically self-referential dimension, and in fact Cuoghi practically saw nothing but himself (whence the self-portraits). And then there are the texts Cuoghi wrote at the time: genuine anti-poems of intoxicated, cynically fragmented suffering.



The following year was unquestionably the most tormented in the artist's career. In 1988, he began the process of metamorphosis that led him to transform himself into a middle-aged man, turning his biological age of twenty-five into that of an overweight sixty-year-old. An extreme artistic performance, according to some. A wholly personal matter, in the view of others, Cuoghi among them. Be that as it may, it is certain that the transformation was a way for the artist to lose the years of his own life but gain others in exchange. Thinking about it, what is the act of becoming an older person, his own father to be exact, if not once again appropriating someone else's eyes? If Cuoghi is able to offer others a glimpse of his own view of the world through his works, in this case it was the artist who imposed the change on himself. By altering his own eyes—and appearance, habits, friendships—Cuoghi underwent a deliberate acceleration and thus paradoxically slowed down a life that was otherwise slipping through his fingers.

Every artist constructs images and, if he or she is really good, invents the laws that define their vision as well. In the history of art, the construction of the vision, of the point of view, of perspective, has always been an intentional act—perspective as "symbolic form," as Erwin Panofsky writes. Accelerated perspectives, decelerated perspectives, anamorphic distortions... The rational rule of perspective can be adapted to the most fantastic irrationality; through each of these versions of it, artists have expressed and sometimes anticipated the cultural climate of the age in which they lived. Turning two points of view into one, and thereby fusing in the mind references that would otherwise lack depth, is a procedure that also defines The Goodgriefies (2000), a work that takes its inspiration from familiar protagonists of the world of American cartoons. In the video, each of the characters created by Cuoghi is a product of the superimposition of two or more original cartoons. Mutant beings, subjected to a corrupted perspective, the Goodgriefies are a gallery of monsters, a true aberration of the gaze in the etymological sense of the term.



In 2002, Cuoghi began the Black Paintings, a series of works inhabited by human, or humanoid, forms—creatures suspended in intermediate stages of evolution. To see a Black Painting, you have to move about, changing the position of your body and letting your eyes rove a good deal. Then, depending on the angle from which they are observed, the subjects materialize on the surface of the painting or withdraw from it, as if vaporized. Created by superimposing many layers of mixed materials, including enamel, pastel, watercolor, pencil and ink, and combining a variety of chemical reactions, each painting makes clear Cuoghi's penchant for experimentation. Like an obsessive alchemist tinkering with evil-smelling glues and solvents, Cuoghi classified the results of his own experiments, so that each work is like the sum of the knowledge acquired in relation to particular chemical combinations. It seems as if we are reading about one of Giorgio Vasari's Lives of the Artists, perhaps that of a true professional of alchemical eccentricities like Parmigianino (even if we are in Milan and not Parma, and the air is filled with the acid rain of late capitalism rather than the mists of mannerism).

Cuoghi continued to apply this experimental method in subsequent works as well: first in the drawings, the Asincroni (Asynchronies) (2002–04), dominated by a truly spooky smile imposed on the features of a deceased relative, and then in the songs, with Mbube (2005) and Mei Gui (2006), where the artist became a singer and musician, turning himself into an African herdsman in one case and a Chinese girl in the other. The process reached its peak in the sound installation Šuillakku (2008), where the experimentation was extended to archeological research, culminating in the philological reconstruction of Sumerian musical instruments and the transformation of the artist himself into an inhabitant of Mesopotamia. He metamorphoses under our eyes, and suddenly we find ourselves catapulted into other worlds and other times, awash in visions and unexpected uncertainties. In this context, I am reminded of experiments in the field of optics, particularly those that concern the self-portrait. It seems that Parmigianino had painted his Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror (1524) to demonstrate his own capacities, presenting himself with the features of an angel and displaying the technical mastery of a demon. Although not created with the same intentions, Cuoghi's double self-portrait on paper from 2005 illustrates his ability to represent himself, for better and worse. In one of the two drawings, the artist proposes a beautified version of his face, in the other, an uglier rendition. The two drawings are intended to be hung on the same wall, but at a distance of almost thirteen feet. It is impossible to take both of them in at a glance. In the same year, he produced another self-portrait, constructed in this case employing a lenticular technique used to produce three-dimensional images. As we look at it, the work gradually reveals itself as an Arcimboldo-esque divertissement, in which the artist's face is seen to be composed of an accumulation of toys and dolls. In both works, the gaze is captured once again, in the sense that it is the artist who dictates the conditions of vision.

And what is anamorphosis if not a shifting of the gaze on the basis of a prearranged imposition by an artist on the field of the work? Cuoghi has anamorphosis inside him. The reality that he sees, and we with him, is almost always the least obvious and most obscure. It is no accident that anamorphosis is frequently used to present the image of something we don't want to see. Consider The Ambassadors, the picture painted by Hans Holbein in 1533 (now in the National Gallery in London). A frontal view of the work offers the compelling image of two diplomats at the height of their human and professional powers. An oblique view presents us instead with the crude representation of a large skull that occupies the foreground. I'm certain that if I went with Cuoghi to the National Gallery he would see the skull at once and find it harder to bring the portraits of the two ambassadors into focus.

On a visit to the Louvre, among the many masterpieces on display, Cuoghi's attention was caught by a bronze statuette in the department of Assyrian Antiquities. Not even six inches high, the statue is classified as a representation of Pazuzu, a demon associated with the winds, feared but also invoked by the ancient populations of Mesopotamia as protection against deadly threats. Identifying his effigies with the demon himself, the Assyrians were convinced that statuettes of Pazuzu could function as an effective defense for the home, the newborn or people in general. With hybrid features, at once human and animal, the demon is surprising in its dissimilarity from any other artifact produced by the civilization of that region and that time, as well as in its affinities with the most widespread images of the Devil that, from the Middle Ages onward, defined the iconographic representation of evil in the West.

When in 2006 I invited Cuoghi to prepare a solo exhibition for the Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art, the artist responded positively, heading straight for Mesopotamia. It goes without saying that I did the same. From one day to the next, I began to see nothing but Nineveh, and then unfortunately Harran as well. I say unfortunately because of all possible times, Cuoghi of course chose the worst, that of the destruction of both cities, just before the entire Assyrian civilization was wiped from the face of the Earth. In this context, Cuoghi created his Pazuzu (2008), a monumental version of the statuette in the Louvre. The work was made using the laser-scanning technique, a precise method of producing prototypes. Appropriating the superstitions of the Assyrians, Cuoghi in fact reiterates the idea that the demon dwells in any of his effigies or reproductions of them. Maintaining the apotropaic function of the original, Cuoghi's Pazuzu has become an amulet on the scale of the imposing baroque castle that hosts the Castello di Rivoli. Certainly, the demon can protect against evil: the presence of the statue reminds us of its creeping reality, just as Holbein's skull is a wise memento mori for those who revel too much in the comforts of life. But once again, it is the artist's eye that commands, that by transporting us elsewhere—in the mental and metaphorical sense, obviously—unexpectedly makes us see a museum in the 21st century as the perfect setting for a monstrous, metamorphic and irremediably irrational presence.

Do Me A Earns

Roberto Guoghi.

S

Intereson for Awhen Villam. Traduction (200 ausmichiaris) photographics Roberto Coughi. millakta. Qu'en-re pre cela chemita ?

C'est un nom accadique servant a disinguer les prieres de purification dans les rimels assiro-babyloniens. Il derive du mot composé, beaucoup plus antique, Suil-la c'est-a-dire i main lovée ». C'est un ordre, comme vade retro, pour guérir ou pour se proteger.

- Euro-in transaction &

Il faut me faire confiance.

— Quand гранция ал-ти спитенскії репуск й за роція ў

Il y a deux ans, pour une exposition personnelle au musee du Crateau de Rivoli. J'ai ere myrte par Marcella Beccaria que n'a fait preuve d'aucun prépagé en dedicaçant le troisième étage du musée à un projet qui, rien qu'en mots, ne poussait pas à faire confiance. Je lui a sculement dit que p'aurais voulu reprosenter la lamentation lors de la chune de Nume. Peut-être ai je ajouté que Nimive a éte décruite durant le mois de poillet, en 612 avant Jesus-Christ, pour confirmer une exigence de scientificité, mais s'at explaque aussi que l'aurais tout fait seul.

 To as fate des reportages dans les lieux auregaels ou as réferes dans le projet (l'antique Averre; L'Ipaq contemporatur);

Cette aire est occupée par les Arabes depuis mille quatre cents aire. Les reconstructions de Babylone de Saddam Hussofm unit l'expression d'un style fasciste, l'aurais perdu mon tomps. Il n'y a pas de successeurs des peuples antiques. Il est plus juste de chercher une continuite parmi les Ethiopiens et les Camites ou les Israeliens. Au lieu de ça, il est raisonnable de visiter bourgeoisement les musées de Paris, Lundres et de Berlin.

- Comment of ar-in of sources -

En doutant, en sompçonnant, l'ai une mesorable insal efaction pour tout. Je ne me contente pas d'un texte, je cherche la seconda opinion et tout de sante après la truisione rasqu'à la promotion. Alessandra peut être aussi plus obstince que mos. Nous somanas derenus une equipe de recherche.

 Nº l'es-en faman vectressé à la religion ou à l'esotiétoire grant de granditer au propé ?

Ce projet a été un trassemblement des adoes que l'accas toujemns laissées en suspins et au rassemblement se sont ajuntees les définitions. La nature du projet permet de tout repenser d'un point de vue originel. Le peuple de Ninive ne savait pas encore separer la magio de la religion.

 No 3'24-10 jument interessed to be stronger-faction provide the tree tillion are provide?

J'su un problème avec la science-fiction et cela vaut également, pour l'esoterisme. Mais j'ai la Ballard et il m'a tomours semblé lette un hamme perspicace. Loi, il vit en province, c'est pourquoi il veut être sur que tout att déjà été « mâche » pour lui. Il est perspicace.



Do Mr A Favor - Roberto Cuoghi.

 Kris-zu zu rapport, un sein de zim projet, entre untiquité () contemporarétie?

Se dedier a Nintve signifie depasser la question des racines iudaico-chrétiennes, dans les siècles de l'enchevêtrement entre religions et mythologies différentes, jusqu'à la source de l'idée religieuse qui a structure la pensée orientale. L'histoire prend au contraire l'aspect de ce qui nous sert maintenant. Cela ne serait pas un problème s'il était garanti de savoir qu'est-ce qui sert maintenant. Nous avons grandi dans un pays de dévots non croyants ou non pratiquants, baptisés, mariés à l'eglise et inhumés selon le rite catholique (ndt : l'Italia. Notre bon sens se fond parmi les Dix Commandements et la Constitution et insiste sur l'éthique sexuelle, comme si elle était un problème déterminant. Moi, je vois un rapport également en dehurs de ce projet, nous vivons dans un passé qui ne passe pas.

 Quelle relation y a t'il entre Suillakku et les projets précédents, et en particulier avec les « chansons » 3

Sa procedure, une improvisation étalee dans le temps. Moi, l'utilise une compétence que je n'ai pas, je ne sais rien faire de ce que je fais et je suis contraint à le faire une centaine de fois. Quand je m'apprête à apprendre, mon travail est terrume. C'est une forme de privilège de ne pas avoir d'éducation spécifique, c'est la méthode pour s'obliger a imaginer. Ce serait plus complique de se souvenir continuellement, de devoir renoncer aux styles de la structure harmonique. Moi, j'ai utilise les canons de la melodie à pic (ou sommet) et de la mélodie à intervalle unique, sans savoir qu'ils sont les modèles melodiques universels, les plus primitifs. J'ai modifié ma voix car cela me semblait juste, sans penser que mes maniérismes vocaux sont la règle de chaque culture.

Le style de chant à voix naturelle est une invention moderne. l'ai interprété une chanson zouloue et une autre chinoise, Métale et Mer Gut, mais naturellement Stüllakku n'est pas ma version d'un original. La lamentation est partie de l'unpossibilite d'avoir une référence. Pire, si jumais il y avait eu un chant funébre pour la rume de Ninive, il n'en seruit resté trace, ca a été un génocide.

— Noton quels critires out été chosses les « chansons » à reproduite ?

Mhibe et Mei Gur étaient des chansons composees avec une predisposition pop. Elles n'étalent pas encore integrées aux systèmes occidentaux, mais elles n'étaient plus non plus conformes à la tradition. Cette impulsion, dans un certain sens, à été considérée comme une faute et les auteurs de ces chansons ont été rayes de l'histoire. Moi, j'ai voulu faire une espèce de rhapsodie de l'impussice. En particulier pour Mei Gui qui est une histoire que peu de personnes connaissent : ça a eté un grand succès à Shanghai dans les années quarante quand la Chine semblait prête à s'ouvrir au liberalisme. En fait, l'originale de Mei Gui est un swing, arrange par un orchestre russe qui imitait les standards americains. Avec la constitution de la Republique Populaire, la chanson a été affichée tel le prototype de la musique pornographique Elle flattuit les allies et ne divulguait aucun concept social. Le texte est un éloge à la beaute de la rose, et son aureur, Chen Gexin, a été contraint aux travaux forces par le gouvernement de Mao Tse-Tung et est mort prisonnier dans son pays. La jeune interprête de certe chanson a vecu exilée toute sa vie. Mei Gura été un succès international des années cinquante. Rose, Rose, I love 1006 une Madamo Butterily de deux minutes, pour les marines, mais il en existe aussi une version country. Ma version pourtant est un nonsens de musique traditionnelle chinoise. Un imbroglio.

— Comme dans un studio d'enegertrement, l'agarpement bedanque vanses accomment, amplifications, câbles, parmeins anni-brans ant laves realde dam ces restallations. Y a d'il imp fonction esthétique montre a se ser-up particulier ?

Un minimum de bon goût.

 Les tenens, unit perincipalement songues pont en épéctotoin ou paniun auditoire é

le vondrais qu'elles le soient pour un auditeur. C'est ennuyeux de penser la couleur de la moquette en fonction de celle des murs ou de savoir que les panneaux photto-absorbants seront echangés par des monochromes. Quand (at presenté Mei Gm à Milan, mon galeriste avait mis a l'entrée une corbeille de pommes qu'on lui avait offerte; une dame a cru devoir lancer les pommes contre les panneaux en fibres de polyester. Mon aspiration est un public d'avaugles.

Quel cappore out les installations sonores avec l'espace d'expostitoy?

A Vilnius, pour BMW-Riack Market Worlds par exemple, Mbube était installée sur les escaliers d'accès au Baltic Triennal, Suillubhu au contraire, occupe entièrement la salle du troisième étage du Château de Rivoli (environ 900 m) ou la Lower Gallery de l'ICA environ 120 m. Le son dépend totalement de l'espace et malheureusement il est indispensable de provoquer à l'avance une alerte générale aux organisateurs. Moi, je l'ai appris à Vilnius. A chaque fois, Mbube et Mei Gui sont des chansons à une trace stéréo, elles penvent s'écouter dans la voiture, mais la lamentation est un ensemble de traces qui doit être organise, c'est un travail beaucoup plus complexe. A Londres, Suillabliu a été compressée pour un espace beaucoup plus petit par rapport au Château de Rivoli. C'est devenu une œuvre différente, mais le son est excellent. Le probleme a été de savoir comment le contenir. Nous ne l'avons pas contenu et avons diffusé la musique à l'exterieur de la Lower Gallery, une solution audio-make-up,

 As-tu trevaillé acac un ingénieur du son pour monter l'exposition au Châtean de Rivoli et à l'ICA ?

Nous avons inventé une petite equipe : un programmateur technique do son et un architecte. Nous avons eté presque parents.

— Computent us-rit - reconstronis - ou + récupér e - les sons que to au millore dans Susllakku?

l'ai regarde toutes les images que i'ai pu me procurer. J'ai reconstruit ce que je pouvais, tout en respectant les matériaux conformes a la fin de l'Age de Bronze, surtont les grelots, les sistres et flûtes à anses (ou à bec) de bambou. J'ai récupéré les cornes d'antilopes et de béliers et un instrument à cordes ethiopsen, que j'ai utilisé pour quelques conjurations ainsi qu'un tambour tibétain pour les exorcismes. Pour reproduire le son du Lilissu, une timbale énorme tres solide, je me suis procuré un de ces tambours rouges qu'on utilise pour les fêtes en l'extrême-Orient, deux microphones a distances différentes et un autre en contact, attache avec un caoutchouc. L'ai altère le ton avec un harmonisateut, ensuite j'ai enregistre les sons alentours, y compris les déplacements d'air, avec une raquette de Bad Minton. Le résultat est le son d'un gigantesque rambour rituel qui n'est pas atilise sythmiquement, mais qui scande les pauses de la liturgie. En devant sur-enregistrer ma voix une dizame de lors, j'ar est recours à un instrument gynnaque qu'ils vendent à la télevision,

Do Me A Favor - Roberto Cuoghi.

qui sert à relaxer la colonné vertebrale, mais je l'utilisais pour futiguer la voix, aînsi j'ai passe beaucoup de temps la tête en bas. En m'entendant répéter le même mot toujours plus lentement, j'ai compris que j'avais passe trop de temps la tête en bas et, pendant quelques jours, ma tête a eu une autre couleur.

- Que « regnifiem » ces traces somms ?

J'ai récité divers sorts, ils dérivaient des incantations contenues dans le recueil Usukku Lemman. Ils empechent les esprits malius de s'approcher. Evidenment, il s'agissait de les appeler par leurs noms, ou de prononcer le nom de la categorie d'esprits, en leur ordonnant de rester éloignés. J'ai utilisé un texte comme une rengame paranolaque qui avertit de la présence de l'ennemi parmi les gens. La partie centrale de la lantentation commence avec une question adressée aux Dieux : « Qui suiz-je si ye n'at plus ma ville, v, ma chaise? · Ainsi commence le chant, avec un prêtre. le Kalutu, qui déclare « Monneur, le peuple pleure » et un chœur très bruyant répète les phrases. Le chieur répète seulement toujours la première phruse du prêtre selon le schema A-A, B-A, C-A. Alessandra a tire (déduit) ce schéma en confrontant les textes. La lamentation finit dans le chœur pour le souvenir de Ninive, avec les lamenteurs qui interprétent l'esprit de la ville qui meurt en pleurant.

- En quelle langue sont exprimies ces traces sonores ?

Les sorts sont en langue accadique, le langage populaire, que j'ai mélangé aux bruits des animaux. Mais le moment solennel de la lamentation est en sumérien, la langue sacrée selon la tradition, comme l'est le latar liturgique. Dans cette phase, les animaux sont exclus. C'est la récitation chorale dédice aux Dieux et elle est dirigée par le Kalutu, vêtu de rouge. À Ninive, il n'y avait pas de Concile du Vatican, la liturgie ne pouvait pas negliger l'exactitude formelle des rites plus antiques. Expérimenter d'autres modes n'aurait pas eté seulement une profanation, aurait été paradoxal. Dans ce domaine, il n'y a pas de progrés. Je veux creare que cette resistance au changement soit le motif pour lequel un rituel paien comme celui-ci puisse être familier.

 Dans quelle mesure peut-on parler, relativement à Suillakku, de improvision : ?

Sullabbu est une supposition, une conjoncture. La même prononciation des mots est une convention déduite de l'hébreu et de l'arabe antique.

 Dans quelle mosure peus un parler, relativement à Saillakhn, d's hypothèses « è

Comoncture est un meilleur terme. Il n'y a pas de vérification.

 Dans quelle mesure pour-ou parior, relativement à Suillabhou d'« crreur », de « marge d'erreur » ?

S'il manque les données suffisantes pour confirmer, elles manquent aussi pour démentir.

- Combren de traces sonores as-tu produit ?

Je ne sais pas. Pai enregistre chaque son individuellement. Cela est l'unique raison pour laquelle la lamentation semble enregistrée de manière optimale. Je me suis consacré à chaque plus petit bruit. Un vase qui se casse est l'ensemble de nombreux enregistrements. Tu préviens la responsabilité de chaqué vase cassé si th considéres la valour d'un présage du septieme siècle avant L-C.

 Combien de traces co-en priligi dens la version e finale e, montrée à Revoli ét à Londres è

Je n'ai jamais pense à les compter.

Définirar-iu Sullakka une metallarion site specific !

Suillakin est condamnée à etre nie sperific.

- Existe l'il une version définitzes de Suillakku ?

Il en existe deux pour le moment. Une pour le Château de Rivolil'autre pour l'ICA.

- Esiste t'il une version partielle de Suillakku =

Non, une lamentation pour la chute de Ninive a l'obligation de l'intégralité. Il ne se dit pas un morceau de messe. Pour l'exposition collective The Great Transformation de Chus Martinezj'ai au contraire voulu isoler le sort d'un personnage de Sialiahkur l'Ukh-Dugga, c'est-à-dire celui qui murmure et produit de la salive, une sorte de sorcier populaire, pas un vrai prêtre. L'idee part de la croyance que la pronouciation d'un sort transforme la salive en venin. Le mot « magicien », Uh-Zu, signifie » expert de salive « et le mot » salive » dans les premiers pictogrammes sumériens est une bouche qui contient un corps, peut-être un cadavre. Toutes les traditions orientales donnent un sens magique a la salive. La loi de Mesopotamie interdisait de cracher dans un fleuve. Mon Ukh-Dugga est un homme désespéré, assit par terre, qui asperge nerveusement son petit instrument à cordes et a chaque phrase de sa formule, crache pour créer une barrière autour de lui et le son des crachats finit par être la contribution rythmique a sa prière.

— Comment as-tu travaillé au montage des traces somores è Sur quel critére les as-tu organisées à

Pour le début de la partie plus solennelle de la lamentation, j'ai eu un conseil. Une combinaison, peur-être restee dans le livre de Duniel. Le texte original est en aramaïque, il remonte a une periode où la langue grecque se melangeait aux dialectes hébraiques. Il est question de la description d'une cérémonie pour l'inauguration d'une nouvelle idole. La séquence des instruments ou de la catégorie d'instruments utilisés pour la cérémonie, se termine avec le mot « sumponiah », qui vient du grecsymphonia », c'est- à- dire l'ensemble harmonise de ces instruments : un orchestre. Cette liste se voit répétée obstinément sous forme d'avertissement aux esclaves qui devaient se prosterner au son des cornes, des trompettes, des flûtes à bec, des harpes... En considérant la tradition médio-orientale, autre qu'être la description d'un orchestre, cela pourrait être la structure de l'exécution, c'est-a-dire un solo pour chaque instrument et puis le son simultane de tous les instruments. En suivant cette interpretation, le resultat est le meilleur que l'on puisse obtenir d'instruments avec peu d'extension mélodique, un crescendo cinématographique. Une suggestion optimale.

Que fermette des traces que in as élimmes ?

J'ai destructure quelques montages de preuve de lamentation pour une exposition hippse a Maami. Comme ferait le chef, d'abord dix minutes de sons agréables de bambou, puis tota les tambours, ensuite seulement les corps et les dix dermières minutes de bambou. De cette manière, la lamentation n'est plus tien, elle occupe l'espace comme l'occuperaît le ventre, je me suis souvenu un dessin anime avec des types tellement faineants qui, pour éviter de mâcher le pain, avalaient la farine, buvaient de l'eau et se mettaient près du feu d'une cheminée pour cuire le pain dans lettr ventre.

Resonnais-tis qu'il y ait analogie entre l'intention de reconstruire personnellement, à l'interior de l'atelier, tots les instruments musicaux pour Suillakku et de les jouet tot-même, et le jour d'exécuter tot-même toutes les lamentations et les princes et quelques actions que lu as exécuté par le parié, comme écrire avec les ongles longs on destiner tom autoportent en ondossant des lamettes qui invertiriatent la vision. (Coccodeists, 1997), on comme quand tu as véeu pendam des années comme à la clais ton pêre ?

If y a de la possessivité dans tout ce que je fais, Malheureusement je crois qu'il est préférable de ne pas avoir de réponse. Par exemple, je ne peux pas dire aimer mon travail, parce que ce n'est pas cela le type de sentiment. C'est comme elever un animal qui peut te manger. C'est un effet que je ne peux nommer.

 Pourques associée à la nécestité d'uné expérience directe, la collaboration d'un spécialisse?

Pour commencer à imaginer quelque chose, pour avoir une voie, en resolvant par exemple le problème du choix des sources des textes originaux, des traductions plus récentes et de leur prononciation. Le vrai obstacle a toujours ète la désorganisation de ces arguments. Nous avons reconstruit aussi la Grande Lyre de Urpar la princesse du pont de la mort Pu-Abi (Great Lyre of Ur by princess Pu-Abi's death pit), l'elément sumerien qui accompagne une partie de Suillakku. L'original était conservé au musée de Bagdad. Il a été détruit durant le dernier conflit en 2003. La carsse harmonique de ce type d'instrument a la forme du corps d'un taureau et se termine par la tête de l'animal comme decoration. La tête en or de l'original a été sauvée car elle se trouvait dans l'atelier de restauration. Dans tous les cas, cet instrument à presque cinq mille ans et n'aurait jamais pu jouer. Nous avions pourtant ses mesures et quelques images radiographiques. Dans ce cas, le specialiste a été un luthier qui s'occupe habituellement de harpes baroques. Nous nous sommes procurés le bois de cedre du Liban et les cordes de boyaux de mouton tressées d'un calibre compatible à une production manuelle. Le cordage suit le système grec qui vient probablement du mésopotamien. La tension des cordes est lice aux possibilités de charges de la structure de l'instrument. Le luthier a été perplexe jusqu'à la fin car la cause harmonique n'a aucun trou et la lyre aurait pu ne pas rejouer tout a fait. La caractéristique de cet instrument est pourtant un petit pont qui interagit avec la vibration des cordes en en prolongeant le son, ce qui est très différent de ce que l'on attend d'un instrument semblable à une harpe (Suillakha exige d'acquerir le goût de certains sons plus adaptes aux schémus rythmiques obstinés plutôt qu'à de vraies mélodies. Un problème qui ne se resout pas en peu de temps). Notre lyre est la version Ikea de l'originale, mais quand) ai produit un mugissement énergique, nous avons compris avoir fait du très bon travail.

 Quel est le certiment résultant de cette collaboration et que nous fourriurs principalement associé à Suillakhu?

Suillabla est un flux de sentiments en quatre phases : isolement,

toge, contradiction et depression. En devant structurer la lamentation, j'ai utilisé les étapes de l'élaboration psychologique de la mort. J'ai du representer un peuple face à son destin, tiraible entre la condamnation à mort et son exécution. La structure de Suillabba provient des manuels d'assistance aux malades en phase terminale. En thanatologie, on décrit un modèle en cinq phases se terminant par l'acceptation. J'ai élimine la dernière phase. Notre idée de soumession vient de la tradition israélite, tandis que Suillabba a l'arrogance d'un chânt de lutte, d'un peuple habitué à utilisé son Dieu. Donc, j'ai élimine la solution, la résignation. Tout reste suspendu par une œuvre qui techniquement doit être un cycle.

— Reconnati-to qu'il y air analogue entre l'image de inn atcher, publice dans certaines revues – dans trapel sa chaise de tratsail qu'entquerée des instruments reconstruits pour produire Suillakku – et l'autopartruit Sans titre, 2005, formé par tellement d'ubjets présents ausni, probablement, dans son atolier :

Oui, i'ai tendance à m'ensevelir pour me defendre. Lela n'est pas arrange si tu considères la gamme des comportements phobiques.

- Quelle fonction a l'atolier dans tes projets à

La fonction que su peux maginer, rependant j'y vis moi.

— Qual vola out les objets on les vers que in produis en fanction de la réalisation d'une œuvre mais qui ne deviamment pas eux-mêmes des œuvres, même s'îls revolvesont un vole tout oussi determinant dans su conception et realisation?

L'œuvre est toujours celle avec la lègende, sinon je dois donner des explications et j'ai une tres mauvaise mémoire. Il m'est arrivé de devoir expliquer des choses qui remontent à plus de dix ans. St ça n'était pas arrivé, peut-être les agrais-se oubliées.

— Pour le programme de filme qui accompagne l'expantion à l'ICA, m as électionné quelques-une de ter films préférés – L'ange exterminateur et Simon du desert de Bannel, Le prince d'Egypte, Turce Ages de Busier Keaton, The Legacy: The Origins of Civilization – Quel tien une-ils west l'exposition?

J'ai choisi les deux films de Banuel, les autres je ne les ai jamois vus, trais je suis certam qu'ils sont parfaits pour le programme de films, qui est une initiative destinée aux familles. J'avais préparé une liste béaucoup plus longue avec des choses qui se sont malheureusement avérses introuvables, telle la version anglaise de Le Saire de l'Homme de Jacques Malaterre realise par France 2. Les films de Bunuel je les ai simplement vus il y a plus de vingt ans de celu. P'en suis fier parce que j'avais ému un vieux technicien de la cinemathéque de Bologne qui me les transfera sur VHS. Ils font partie du programme éducatif que je me suis imposé seul. Plus qu'un lien, je parlerais de malechetion. Aujourd'hui ces films sont distribués en Italie par l'éditeur San Paolo. Cela ne semble pus une forme extravaganie de personnage....

Quel rapport entrettement la réalité et l'invention rélationnem à un privet comme Suillakku ?

Quel que son le rapport possible existant ou bien aucun, ils se fondent sans plus vouloir se séparer. Suillakhu est également une œuvre profondément démentjelle. Tandés que tu cherches à le convaincre que c'est seulement une parodie, il arrive quelque chose et tu dois recommencer.

Du Me A Favor - Roberto Cuoghi.

- Qui est qu'est-ce que Partien :

C'est l'homme des esprits malins du vent bruineux qui descend du Zagros, la chaîne montagneuse tranienne et remonte le Tigre et l'Euphrate jusqu'au Golfe Persique, déchargeant l'épidenne. Cela signifie qu'il est l'unique ame capable de contrôler la triade des demons de la tempête, Lilu, la Lilitu et l'Ardat Lili. Il est surement le fils de Hanpa ou Hambu, mais personne ne sait precisement qui est ce Hanga. Pazuzu est sans doute un demon, mais re-figure et nommé, il devient un instrument magique et cela a été son travail pendant cinquante ans. Pazuzu a été presque toujours un talisman, un petit talisman pour protéger des muladies. À une certaine periode, il a été représente en opposition a Lamatsu, l'unique démon plus laid que lui qui empoisonnait les murais et offrait la fièvre mortelle, le typhus ou la malaria. Pazuzu était l'unique prophylasie permettant d'éviter de boire l'eau du marais. Si les symptômes de Lamatsu se manifestaient, serait intervenu un spécialiste qui, usant avec attention la langue sacree, aurait su invoquer Pazuzu, l'unique démon capable de jeter Lamatsu en enfer. liberant le souffrant

 Prinquin as-tu-chaise un domon comme unique element virunt de Pexposition?

Pazuzu est le passe qui ne passe pas. Un démon comme talisman est un exemple excellent de l'idée religieuse animiste, en opposition au monorbéisme, aux religions de la transcendance qui ont pris forme par le refus de ces pratiques. Le fondement des trois religions d'Abraham réside dans les tables de l'alliance, en grande partie le reglement d'une vie comminautaire. Les premiers commandements originaux declarent pourtant le culte à un seul Dieu, ils intendisent l'utilisation de son nom à but mortel et quelques représentations de lui que ce soit. De cette manière, ils ne font autrement que confirmer l'essence de l'idee religieuse immanente des peuples. paiens, c'est-à-dire que Pazuzu vit à travers chacune de ses representations. L'intuition judaique est une approche intellectuelle de l'idée religieuse, c'est une discipline plus engagee qui s'est fortifiée en résistant aux tortures assyrio-babyloniennes mais à travers des interdictions pragmatiques. Malgre tout, il a été trouvé des talismans de Pazuza egalement en Palestine et qui remontent au quatrieme siècle avant J.-C., des talismans clandestins, petites têtes, sceaux, broches en forme de Pazuzu, longremps après la chute de Ninive et après Babylone. Pazuzu a survecu, caché à ses proprietaires, démontrant une limite insurmontable, la tendance à un comportement qui n'est pas culturellement determine.

— Pourquin la sculptius de Pazieza a r-elle été réalisée en scannam. l'originale time perite statue conservée au Eurore i et non pas tamplement en fa réproduitant à partir de la documentatione photographique existante?

Nous avons utilisé un appareillage Laica qui a reconstruit le modéle tridimensionnel du petit bronze sous forme d'un mage de points. La Giugiaro Design a poursuivi avec le système de prototypisation à travers des fraises gigantesques qui normalement modélent les carrosseries. Je ne voulais pas faire la statue de Pazuzo et je ne l'ar pos faite. Mon Pazuzu est l'agrandissement arithmétique d'un talisman. Pazuzu est l'homme des démons des vents mas egalement un talisman contre les maladies. Maintenant au-dessus de l'ICA, il ressemble à un monument mais c'est seulement un petit peudentif conserve au Louvre. Je suis l'auteur, mais aussi un arfisan semite du premier millénaire avant J.-C. Je ne suis pos superstitieux, mais Pazuzu est une idole paienne et son esprit habite chacune de ses representations.

- Ex-tu ime personne précise :

Je suis un ingenu très sévere, j'ai des contradictions en symphonie.

 Donac-mae in example de détail important, pour jou vélatif auponces Suillakku;

Le jour où a été démonte Pazuzu par le Château de Rivoli pour l'emmener à Londres, il a été trouvé un petit pendentif en métal, une litanie dedsee à la Vierge était înscrite : REGINA SINE LABE ORIGINALI CONCEPTA ORA PRO NOBIS : Reine conçue sans peche originel, prie pour nous. .) Un dévot a voulu enfiler dans la fissure, entre le point d'appui de la statue et sa base, la Mere de l'Homme qui écrase la tête de Satan, amorçant le second talisman qui desormais est le mien. Si j'avais cherche une verification, un reactif, je n'aurais jamais révé une réponse si directe et inspirée. Qui que ce soit qui ait pris l'initiative, il n entendu l'appel d'un démon babylonien et a repondu a une expression paienne avec une autre expression paienne. Son expression a accrédite la mienne, creant un peu de confusion car son expression est une image de devotion et la mienne une image puenne. Une héresie, philologiquement. J'ai appris qu'à été trouvé une autre Vierge sans peché derrière un panneau phonoabsorbant. Je ne sais pas dire si cela est un détail important, je le ressens comme un encouragement car dans tous les cas, quelqu'un a demontre me croire jusqu'au fond.

 Donne-mor un exemple de détail pay important, pour tor, relablé un projet Suillakku é

Il y a un detail auquel je n'avais jamais pense jusqu'à ce qu'il ait été question d'emmener Pazuzu a Londres. L'Institute of Contemporary Art se trouve à l'intérieur de la Nash House, propriéte de la famille royale qui est sur le boulevard des lieux de cérémonies publiques donc le demon de la Mésoporamie a du attendre la permission du Webminister Council, des Royal Parks et du Crown Estate, le bureau de la Reine. Après une semaine de silence est arrivée une objection : « obscene ». Ils ont réquisitionne les photographies et les mesures du sexe du démon et tout a été bloque pour encore trois autres semaines. Personne ne s'était attardé sur un détail évident : Pazuzu n'est pas un nu classique car le diable n'a jamais été le diable sans une érection imposante.

 Li changement d'échelle (monumental) à t-il une signification par rapport à l'original (il tient dans une main)?

C'est une protection proportionnelle au château de la Maison de Savoie du musée de Rivola. Pazazu était un objet magique à usage personnel. Le mien est un fétiche institutionnel.

 Le changement de localitațion (extérieur) a v'il une significațion por capport à l'original (conservé dant une varrane à l'intérieur du murée) ?

Les localisations que j'ai choisses sont logiques par rapport à l'usage original, devant et au-dessus de l'entree. Pazuza est un chien de garde. C'est la vitrine du musée qui l'endort.

— Quelle fonction à Paziezu quand il prend la forme de l'Projet pour le Château de Rievh : Le devin digital qui accompagnan l'invitation, et autres materiaux de promisson de l'exposition à Rievh : E Sur cc dessin, Paziezu ressemble à un Freuk manga, il est quand même tres différent de la sculpture homonyme, il rappelle l'imaginaire de tes wuctes précidentes comme les bandes dessinées de Warkol en version. super-hiro: Friendly Neightbourhood, 2001 i su les carroons de The Goodgriefies (2000)

C'est un Pazuzu pour enfants car l'idolârrie est une pratique consentie à tous les enfants : parler aux poupées, leur donner un nom, leur offrir à manger et leur inventer des pouvoirs étranges. Pour supporter la perte d'un hamster, ils recourent à des pratiques funéraires de l'Homo Sapiens. Il y a des aspects de l'archéologie qui ressemblent à ceux de la pédagogie, mais joués de façon contraire. C'est un effort éducatif, non par accumulation, mais par soustraction jusqu'à atteindre le modèle primitif.

- Quel est le rapport entre Suillakku et Puzuzu?

Le mot Suillakku. Je suppose que Pazuzu fut une alarme silencieuse, contrôlée à travers une inscription et chargée de la position dont ie te parlais, la Su-il-la. Cette hypothèse n'est pas discutée en archéologie. Pazuzu reste un démon très agressif. portraiture justement dans une position agressive. Mais la même position est utilisée pour représenter les esprits gardiens d'origine africaine beaucoup plus antiques que Pazuzu. La meme position est celle de Humbaba qui surveillant la forer de cèdres. Plus qu'une agression, elle ressemble à un « stop », un signal comparible avec la position qu'a endossé un sens liturgique, plus justement un exorcisme. Deux archeologues de Turin, Carlo Lippolis et Roberta Menegazzi qui s'occupent d'hellenisme en Asie Centrale, m'ont tont de suite fait note que Pazuza n'a pas les jambes alignées, il est en train d'avancer ; une incongruité par rapport à un geste solennel. Je crois qu'il y a un renforcement au même signifiant de sommation, à part me souvenir de représentations du démon agenouillé ou carrèment assis mais toujours une main levée. Le rapport est la proposition de croire à l'incongruîté d'un démon occupe à une position dédiée à la prière et à la convenance d'une prière hurlée avec rage.

 Pranquoi la religion i ombione l'archéologie et la science-fiction, estelle decenne le sujet de nombreuses actories contemporarine.

Je ne crois pas que ce soit par méchancète et l'irragine que ce n'est pas non plus une forme de distraction. Je suis un observateur digne de foi d'œuvres contemporaines, je me souviens pourtant que le Château de Rivoli a réçu en don, en qualité d'institution culturelle, le grand atlante scientifique du créateur Harun Vañya. Je l'ai bien regardé et il semble fait par un enfant. Le village complet me semble être dans un désordre retentissant. Il y a quelques jours, l'ai vu une guérisseuse à la félévision. Elle expliquait que devant l'autel chaque prêtre lève l'hostie consacrée, qui n'est en fait qu'une pâte faîte de farine, et declare « ceci est le corps du Christ ». Alors la guerisseuse a pris son talisman et a dit « Si cela est faux afors cela également, mais si cela est vrai, cela l'est également. »

— Quelle expression securi-il preferable d'afficher face il Pazzaza è

A Londres, quelques touristes japonais se sont fait photographier avec la main levée comme salut, imitant Pazuzu.

Pourquoi le salur è

Parce qu'ils ne savaient pas la vérité.

Qualle est la meilleure munière de aprimienter ce princt 3

Nous le découvrirons en nous trompant. La lamentation évite chaque proposition alors que Pazuzu est idéal pour les photographies nurritiques. A Londres, quelques (nuristes l'ontdejà cherché inutilement sur leur Cityguide.

- Me donnorus-tu une définition de « documentation » ?

L'ensemble de données utiles à faire croire pouvoir conserver quelque chose à jamais. La documentation est le sarcophage désfoirs.

 A propos de documentation, feran-to une exprossion une la documenter equestion piege sachunt que nous noumes en train de la faire. 3 - Summes-nous en train de le faire e ;

Je fais beaucoup d'expositions sans même aller les voir. Ce n'est pas mon devoir, car ce n'est pas mon envie de les faire. La plupuri des expositions que je fais repondent au désir de quelqu'un d'autre.

 Selon tos augunid laus, panterant-on pendre la trace la documentazione de quelgas enero e

S'il ne s'agit pas de preuve à ta décharge et si tu n'entends pas creuser un trou dans le sable, c'est embétant de perdre même ce qui ne sert surement pas. D'une certaine manière, nous sommestenus de conserver et de protéger également la variole. C'est un ennemi precieux, en isolement depuis trente ans mais pas vruiment éliminé. J'ai été vaccine et toi aussi sûrement. Alessandra non, car elle a quatre ans de moins que moi. La variole a été declarée vaincue à travers une campagne de prévention mais il n'a jamais été isolé un traitement. Les derniers échantillons de variole sont conserves dans un laboratoire de Atlanta et en Sibérie. L'idée était de détruire la dernière trace de variole avant le début du troisieme millenaire. Ceci n'a jamais été fait et quand ils diront l'avoir fait, ce sera stirement un mensonge. La variole est la documentation nécessaire pour créer le vaccin specifique, l'unique solution possible. Sans une culture de variole de référence, si se déclenchart une nouvelle épidemie, le monde ne serait plus prompt a réagir. Après l'alarme terroriste, des millions de sortes de vaccinsont ête prépares, mais telles des reponses défensives, ce qui pourrant être une ruse, car ces dernières années, la population mondiale n'a jamais été tant immunodépressive. Les immunisés pourraient tomber malades, ou au contraire pourraient êtres sains, multipliant l'infection. Pour une serie de maladies et de nouvelles maladies, pour des questions alimentaires et thérapeutiques, surtout pour la diffusion des thérapies anti-tumorales, nous sommes une population immunologiquement genec

— Si tu pore als ou devais choire, preférerais-tu foire un livre sans images ou un livre sans mots ?

Sans images. Je voudrais construire un texte regulier, même si linguistiquement problematique, discutable, et je voudrais lui faire subir une série de traduction à la chaîne. Aller et retour. Le livre finirait avec le texte avec lequel il est commence, mais avec des significations nouvelles, acquises durant les traductions. Indubitablement ce serait un texte différent, ce serait un cadeau.

— Certaines des chores que to as faites, tiene les as pas faites purce qu'elles des rendraient des anières. Et pourtant, on en parle comme so elles en étaient « presque ». Me domicrais-en une définition personnelle. L'une comme ?

C'est desà fait. l'unuvre est celle avec la legende et le reste est facultarif.

Do Me A Fayor - Roberto Cuoghi.

- Quelle winter te plannie il de faire maintenant, après Suillakku ?

Le livre sans image. Le texte sera construit sur la base de philologiques et aura besoin d'établir un parcours de traductions. Je ne crois pas savoir le faire. Il faudra beaucoup de temps ou bien déranger de nombreuses personnes avant de commencer les traductions.

Gela i'interesserait-il de erver une nouvelle lamene?

Je dirais que non. C'est attirant l'atmosphère lièe à l'idee de creer une nouvelle langue, mais une nouvelle langue u'est rien sans un acte politique. Je ne suis pas enclin a reclamer des différences on des appartenances. Dans un certain sens, créer une nouvelle langue serait comme pratiquer la clandestinité ou l'homicide politique.

— Un archeologue, mentablement, jan des erreurs i hopothèse faunes, etc. « pour arriver à décontrir quelque chose, mais on ne peut pas dire qu'il « uncente ». Tot au contraire, tu i es lanse la possibilité à inventer beaucoup de choses dans ce projet, en conférant uni expérience concrête à quelque chose qui pour un archéologue vixto seulement une conjuncture — por exemple en faisont jouer des instruments dont e'est perdu le son. Quelle différence y a-t-il entre l'approche de l'archéologue et la tienne dans le projet Suillakhu ?

L'approche d'un archéologue est de type scientifique, mais chaque hypothèse est la consequence d'une fantaisie. Les erreurs ou la mèthode scientifique sont des instruments pour l'imagination. Pour moi, tout devait rester en place dans l'imagination. Le premier problème a été de rassembler les informations necessaires pour pouvoir commencer à imaginer quelque chose. À ce moment, simplement, je n'ai pas écarté cette possibilité, j'ai mèlé ces informations jusqu'à la fin. Choisir n'est pas toujours un devoir. Dans ce cas, en choisissant, j'aurais dû m'arrêter.

- Quel est le musée idéal ?

Celui qui est le plus complet, le plus libre et le plus proche.

— Selon quel erctire as en vetito cos nueso et los nuesos archeologiques, le Louvre par exemple ? Dam la brochum de l'exposition de L'ICA, il y a une de ter photos pendant que tu visites, je crois, justement le Leiure durant les vérifications pour l'exposition.

Oui, c'est le Louvre, mais je n'ai pas de critère, je me perds ou je me fais guider et normalement je me distrait en continuation. C'est pour cela que je ne frequente pas les theâtres, je me concentre sur ce qui reste dans la penombre. Mais cette photographie n'a pas été prise durant les verifications pour l'exposition, moi j'étais à Paris pour accompagner Alessandra au theâtre MAC de Créteil. C'est une photographie d'il y a quelques années, au moins six ans, c'est pourquoi je semble plus âgé qu'anjourd'hui. Il y avait une exposition dedice à Merce Cummigham et Alessandra avait utilisé une pellicule photo très sensible. Le jour suivant, au Departement d'Art Oriental, Fai vide l'appareit photographique en faisant quelques photos de moi et de Pazuzu. Luca Cerizza a vu ces photos, elles hu sont apparues plemes de nostalgie et nous avons décide de les utiliser.

 On diract presque un daguerréstype:... c'est tot our la plinto, n'ext-ce pas 2

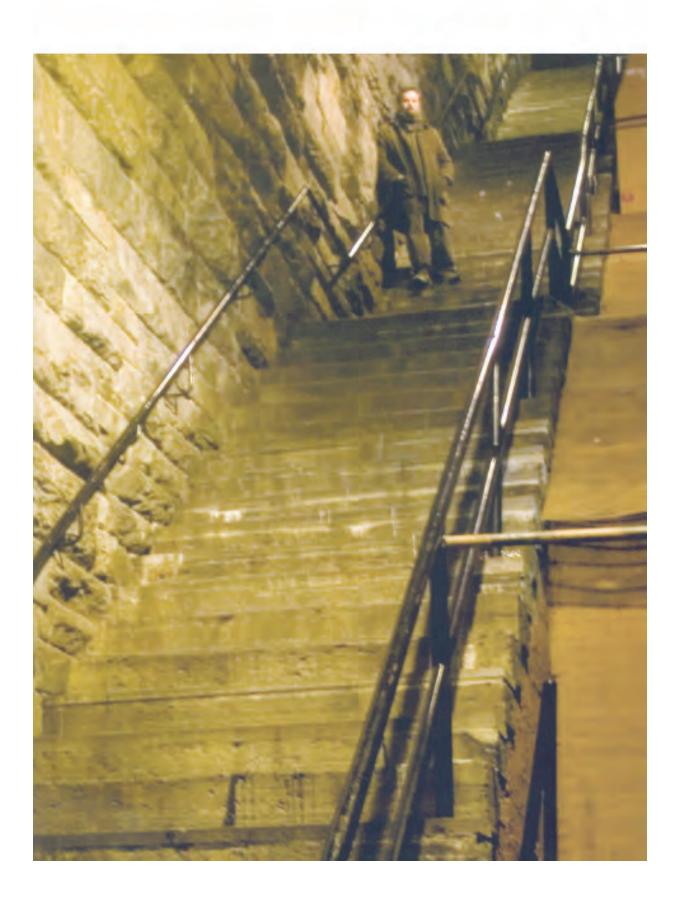
Oui, moi avoc la mauvaise pellicule.

— Me domicrais-tu une definition genérale de la façon dont in co travaille à Suillakku, de sa signification ? Si in devan le réduire à une explication simple, saurais-tu me dire en quoi confiste ca propa ?

La superstition est la nécessité inconditionnelle d'une signification. C'est une caracteristique précise, aucun animal ne ressent le besoin de célébrer les forces surnaturelles. L'idée religieuse est un vice exclusif et précis, tellement précis qu'il doit être une base neurologique à l'ensemble des comportements qui d'habitude sont consideres irrationnels. Je veux l'appeler vice car il doit être lie au fait que l'épaisseur du cortex cérébral de l'homme est sans precedent. La matiere grise est l'aire cerebrale qui détermine la pensee abstraite, une couche de cellules decouvertes qui provoque la necessite d'attribuer un ordre a tous évènements accidentels. De la même manière, les impulsions désordonnées, durant le sommeil, rejoignent le cortex et viennent se lier pour ressembler à une histoire, pour avoir un sens et être gérées. L'unique règle de la survic est l'adaptation. Chaque animal reste vivant en s'adaptant aux imprévus, mais l'homme veut aussi savoir pourquoi et surtout pourquoi lus, ne peut supporter l'idée que l'ordre naturel sont un ensemble d'événements sans signification. Pour cette raison, n'ayant pas de réponse, il se l'invente, en établissant qu'il s'agit d'une punition. En trouvant un motif à la punition, donc en déduisant la mamère pour par la suite l'éviter. Dans ce sens, l'idécreligiouse est le symptôme d'un cas d'hypertrophie entre les mammiferes, une disproportion avantageuse, comme le cou de la girafe. L'aire superficielle du cerveau est une accumulation de cellules spécialisées pour trouver des explications, mais les trouver dans chaque cas, même sans avoir les informations suffisantes. Un système qui oblige à distinguer entre juste et faux pour ensuite attribuer une signification aux circonstances, qui autrement serait un flax chaotique. Encore pire, car le resultat est une incoherence des règles d'adaptabilité de la sélection biologique. Cet excès de matière grise génère une tendance éthique, une prise de position qui est completement inopportune par rapport aux lois de la nature, élaborée à partir du concept artificieux d'injustice, finit par juger immoral les eléments structurels de la vie, comme le vent, la pluie, une maladie ou la mort.

Roberto

6 mai - 17 juillet 2008.



973. But une année médiscre pour le vin-plusée bonne peur les coups d'état. C'est surtont miracle des epinemendes, la sortie de L'osorciac de William Friedkin, l'inauguration de l'exposition Trass/souer au Konstaniseum de Lucerne et la nassango de Roberto Caoghi a Modette.

14159 moves Stiphoni Ministen,

Si Roberto Guogia no parrage pour ainsi dire rien ayec les devenirs-trans de Molinies, Klatike ou Luthi, ni même avec les versants heroiques du Body Art (sons parler des théories queer qui alfaient marquer les dernières décennies du XX Boharto Giogdo, siècle , il a probablement su tirer de cesopérations de travestissement une falée ventrale

at covibrante : celle du transfert et de la prosection, du devenir hypothetique de ces corps mi-fictifs, mi-réels, et l'occasion unique spii ponivait mus être donnée de les découvrir au jeur, transfigures, dans un espace-temps bien réel.

La pièce qui l'a fait connaître (non sany quelques malentendusrisibles d'ailleurs) - su lente transformation durant sept aus en son propre pere - ne relève pas d'une unse en scene ou d'un rituel de passage d'un mos q'un untre (sexuel, social, religieux), mais de la prosection d'une experience vecue de dé-possession. Une expérience qui a a voir avec le transfert, donc avec l'amour. Caoghi prend Lucan à la tertre, au pied du langage. Il adapte la notion de transfert à sa pratique d'artiste, il montre que c'est d'abord dans l'autre que le sujet s'identifie, que le transfert ne saurait être localise à la cure malytique, mais qu'il s'agir d'un phénomène absolument général au lien interhumain, ou sont mis en jeu les mecanismes d'identification, de projection, d'introjection. C'est là que pour manier la relation transferentielle, nous uvons, en effet, a prendre en nous à la façon d'un corps étranger, une incorporation dont nous sommes le sujet-patient, toujours en attente. Cuoghi devenunt son père n'est repétition de ce qui s'est passe de tel, que pour être de la ntême forme. Il n'est pas ectopie, un organe en deluirs de son trajet normal. Il n'est pas ombre des anciennes trompenes. I) est isolation dans l'actuel de son fonctionnement put de tromperje. Cette espece de mise en covibration (semiotique en fin de compte), ce n'est pas etomant qu'on appelle ça comme ça, pudiquement, le transfere Et l'on a bien raison aussi de ne l'appeler que comme ça. Ce p'est pas l'amour, mais c'est l'amour au sens ordinaire, c'est l'amour tel qu'on se l'imagine. Il n'y a d'amour que de l'identification portant sur ce quatrieme terme, a savoir le Nom-du-Père : il n'y a de transfert que de l'identification portant sur cette antre dimension, à savoir ce qui fait trou.

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· Quello excellente Journée pour un envenime. (

Depuis sa sortie, L'exercire de Friedlen est un trou infini, une source de langage et d'appropriation (voir la superbe scène de Newsy Aform 2). De la généalogie et de la fabrique du film, mus savons deux ou troix choses. Que l'histoire se base sur des firits réels, un cas d'exorcismo sur un gasçon de 14 ans en 1919 dons lo Maryland. Que la bande-son est realisée par Milte Oldfield (a qui Jean-Michel Jame doir beaucoup), a partir d'un extrait de Tubullar Boli. Ce qui est moins connu, c'est qu'une partie de l'inspiration de William Friedkin viest d'un tableso de Magritte : + 11 est possible que cercares montanuents promunes adent en une influence sur nor, mais jamais de natures conserves. La seule printate qui ait jamais ingliacnee directament I say de mei fillien, c'est valle de Magritte L'empire des lumières. Fin en torque y'as est cette toilé que le dévant tecroite pour la soine au le prêtre arrive précule la mauje des Muc Na! done L'exorcisto. l'archania qui s'av digugrani. T'ai direc cham une malou domain ser nee ray illiments fan le nobus type de resorbing, si i in fair éclairer la seisse de maissent similaire. Je n'ai par copie es tableau. Je w'en met sentement empire pour ce qui rorie aujored han comme un des plans les plus messassable du filles a

Ce qui est encore plus confidentiei, et dont j'avais neglige l'interés jusque-là, se rapporte a la voix de la possédée, la petite Regan. doublee par l'actries Mexesdes McCambridge, une ancienne alcoolique. Pour cette interprétation vertigineuse, il semble que Mercedes se son beaucoup investie moralement et physiquement. Elle se serait remise à boire et à fumer pour obtenir cette voix trèsgrave, et aurai) même demandê û être attachée a une chaise. La roix de Regan, celle qui lui fait dire cette réplique devenue polièbre, a la mere aux des gazas en enter «, ent en flat l'incarnation de celle du demon Pazugu. Nous y voilà, Pazugu, demon générique qui aura traversé bien des histoires. Figure mythologique, nu-homme mi-animal, entre chien et leury Son penis en forme de serpent est le détail le plus cocause du carron d'invitation de l'exposition de Roberto Carghi au Castello di Rivoli, reprise dans un petat format, de manière mours convaincante, par l'ICA de Londres.

Pazuzo, redoutable démon du vent dans la mythologie mésopotamienne, personnage de Marvel, boss do jeu vides Harmony of Dissonance, theme recurrent de Gorillaz, revient. nous viatrer depuis le grand excalier du château. Certe gigantesque sculpture de plus de 5 metres a été péalisée par Cuaglis à partir d'une manascule statuette d'époque assyrienne conservée au

Depuis son posts d'observation, Pazuzu, l'esprit et la queue maltournes, domine le paysage d'une plaine mélancolique. Que regarde-t-il ? Le souvenir pendu de la chute de l'empire assyrien. là guerre en Irak, là défaite d'une civilismon, celle de la démocratie on celle des représentations du monde et de l'histoire ? De or chapters deamanque, Cuogha tire une teuvre au blanc, un opéra sans scenes, sans images, une partition déchaînée de imentations, de plaintes; de prières qui se dévoule dans une onfilade de chambres vides. Ce vide-là ne s'inscrit pas dans la tradition mystique de Klein. Pas plus dans celle, minimaliste es conceptuelle de Robert Burry ou Art & Language. Ce vide indique quelque chose d'une mutation de l'art depuis plusieurs décennies. où la question du temps et de la durée s'est peu a peu substituée à celle de l'espece, un temps hors limite; ou s'inventent d'autres materialités, d'autres relations à l'espace et au visible. Ce vide n'indique pes un refus, un désir de disparition on de sonneaction, ne laisse pas l'espace vule, bien un contrage-

I Ber You Look Good On The Dancefloor.

Car le vide de Cuoglia n'est par rien. C'est un espace scenique, amphique (où se détachent les blancs et les noirs, les perspectives et les ombres, distinctement), foré par le temps (monte en sequences), et surtout par la voix et la parole, innommables. Durant deux annees, Cuoghi a travallle à partir de recherches scientifiques (avec des archéologues) et de ses propres ressources tienennelles, pour réaliser et interpréter l'intégralité de cotteneuvre sonore, c'est-à-dire chaque voix, chaque instrument, jusqu'à inventer une laugue perdue, aujoued'uni inaccessible. A travery lui, cage de resonance et de transformation, dans un ser de métamorphoses délirantes, c'est soute une foule qui exprime ses croyances et ses transes. Caughi n'est pas l'incarnation monstrucuse d'un autre mais l'expression vivante et totalisée d'un monde anglouxi. Il est tons les eléments, le vent, la terre, il est l'homme qui chante avant le combat et la bête qui mourt. Il est l'homme deleuzien, advenu selon les propheties de Foucault. l'arruse écrit pose l'ammat qui westri », disait al. Recement un espace vide seuls sont visibles les panneaux d'isolation sonore non murs et les enceintes) y été aussi claigement compose, soudainement saturé de projections, de visions hyperrealistes, de flashs d'information et d'apparitions fantomatiques. C'est le comp de Rince de cette piece magnifiquement radiophonique de realtoyer l'artiste à sesfonctions initiales: penser un temps après les images, après la guerre des genros et des identitarismos, ponsier le proces d'identification à l'extreme, à l'extreme de su propre dissolution.

Avec l'opéra Saillahéo (mot repris du répertione assyrien), Caoghi tente de rouvrir l'infernsile question du spectacle, acile qui convre notre approche des fictions, des espaces, un trapport à l'invisible, un déchainement, au théâtre de l'hysterie, c'est-a-dire au fantasme du roir et du savoir.

Comment un rapport à l'ocuvre se trouve-t-il deja projeté, quelle est sa forme, la temporalité de sa venue, ou de sa revenance, et rela pur-devant et per-dedans nous-memes, noire regard? Et c'est aussi la question : par quel biais une emotion vinie rectase et diulieur nous fait-elle accèder à l'enigme des formes, des signifiants : Le lieu est sondamement possède par la vision d'une machine absente. L'effacemen matériel des matriments, du stradio-d'enregistrement, de toute la structure de production et de diffusion accentes sa présence. La partition qui se joue sei travaille et déplace l'histoire et la géographie de cette instrumentation. Aujourd'hau, plus qu'hier, mut est question d'eniglacements et de transferts. Transferts du leu du mythe à celoi du missee, à celle d'une salle de projection, devenue une viste chambre d'eche. Le dispositif a ceci de particulier. Caoghi u'est pas seniement l'inbirprets miss l'archinere de cer espace. Il le definit.

À cet endroit, il fandruit inventer una phenomenologie rapide de l'émotion ressentie dans ces tares et grands moments de ionissance lyrique. Pourquoi souvent ces instants imperceptibles de ramprisation de l'espaire par le son se signalent-ils par l'a ruption d'une angoisse melancolique, d'un sentiment de perse un de chagrin, de lanientation ?

Expange plaisir que ce plaisir sonore, calini aussi de la souffrance y compris la souffrance tour a trir recite de la gosge fionée sous l'effort pour contentr l'urraption de cette emettion, tant à est yrai que dans nos coltures et dans l'art contemporain. l'emetion fion être reloulee. Il n'y a plus qu'au cinema que le son ou la missipor produisent encore cet effet laberateur, fibreroit les images de lours significations premaeres, et leur contérent un autre realisme, luper-rece. So nous parlors de jonissance musicale ou lyraque, c'est.

bien en tant que la roussance se distingue du plaisir. Ce qui curacterise cette emotion, c'est une loin d'être diffuse, son terruption on sidérante, entrainant la chute de tout ce qui n'est paspure forme on pure image on pur sens. Au moment on le son surgit. la musique tompt foure attache avec la parole et mec l'informancement de l'espace. Cetté émotion est caractérisée par l'irruption de ceste marque du sontiment de perte absolue qu'est le sanglat couffé, au point d'enlever au spectateur lui-même toute possibilité de parole. La montée mélodique en spirale, produit ins presentiment on une sorte d'appel d'un point culminant à veni qui finara par pollir, comme en musical. Co point d'appel, ce point l'imite, finit par éclater, par déchiner l'enveloppe musicale qui le contenan jusqu'alors, point de basculement de la journance dans l'ouble. Les discontinuités, les disjonctions sonores détournent la transique liturgaque de la scene sacrée à la scène profane. Pourtant, initialement, le dispositif de Caughi fait en appel constant à tous ce qui est de l'ordre du visitel. On ne peut manquer alle voir les scènes de bătăille, et la performance de l'artiste obligé de se déployer sur toute l'étendue de son répertusse. Le recours aux illusions visuelles constitue toute la force cinematographique et la mécanique théstrale de l'opera, un ressort fendamental de la conyunce comme genre ou du peine comme croyance

Mais instement, ce qu'il est impretant de noter c'est que meme au crirente, que semble privilègier l'inrage, tous ces aspects s'effondrent complétement des l'instant où le son se déploie, au point que beaucoup féritient les yeux pour mieux l'envendre. C'est d'ailleurs per certains côtes ce phenomène d'autonomisation complète de la musique, de dérachement du son comme objet, qui a rendu possible le dispositif voligieux du cinema, comme celui du dispositif de l'upera ou du concert Rock.

La question pain l'article comine pour le spectateur est bien st'inventer d'autres stratègues de contournement du registre visual, d'inventer d'autres agencoments pérceptifs, des formes de durce, de cictores, de décournements Inventions qui ont a voir avec l'evenement livsterique, avec le passage de son attrait, de son pharme hyperétique.

L'hysterie far a tout moment de son histoire, une emotion naise en confrainte d'erre inventée, comme spectacle er comme mage, elle allar jusqu'à s'inventer elle-même su contrainte etait son éssence) lorsque faiblissait le talent des fabricants parennes de l'hysterie. Une invention : un évenement des signifiants. Mass dans l'evenement même des trop evidentes douleurs hysteragues, je ne sons qu'une metaphore qui agit pour toutes les inventions ac ruelles, celles qui traitent avec l'extrême visibilite, avec le desastre et la conspiration.

Comme les madecins de la Salpórtiére, observant l'hysteraque en artistes, rous soumes nous aussi, specialeurs et savants, contraints de regarder chaque ceuvre, chaque objet, comme un corps l'irré a ses symptomes, comme une talle, clore un chapitre de l'histoire de l'arr. La folte est une libération, qui n'est pus à supposes comme une perte abstraire de la raison mais comme un sample dérasquement, une contradiction à l'inteneur de la raison. Dans Soillacku, les chants, les cris et la frayeur n'en finissent pas d'atteindere leur point culminant, s'adonnair à une veriable crise, un ritte de devenation collèctif. d'incorporation de l'espace les uns introdusent un démembrament, une différenciation, un dénachement d'un tout mythique. Tout ce qui concorde a produite un insingue.



Roberto Cuoghi

LITURGIE E DEMONI

Laura Cherubini

LAURA CHERUBINI: Carissimo Roberto, ha ricevuta l'Immagine del nostro piccolo demone, è bellissima. Come mai hai deciso di far uscire da una bacheca del Louvre una piccola statua ("grande come una sorpresina delle patatine" l'hai definita) di tremila anni fa per ingigantirla e portaria a Rivoli? Roberto Cuoghi: Per avere un'immagine all'appuntamento che ho da due anni con il Castello di Rivoli. A settembre il museo ha ottenuto il permesso dal Louvre, ma è stato solo l'inizio. Marcella Beccaria, che mi aveva invitato per la mostra personale, ha dibattuto per cinque mesi con gli uffici del museo per l'arte contemporanea, il Dipartimento d'Arte Orientale e il Centro di Ricerca e Restauro dei Musei di Francia, e a febbraio abbiamo avuto una data e un laboratorio dove è avvenuto un rilievo scansiometrico del piccolo bronzo. È un demone della Mesopotamia precristiana. Acquisito con una tecnica laser di scansione tridimensionale dal gruppo Giugiaro-Design, il modello digitale del demone è arrivato a Torino. Negli stabilimenti Italdesign-Giugiaro è iniziata, in scala gigante, la modellazione su resina epossidica per riproporzionare il demone di Babilonia da innalzare sul terrazzo di fronte all'ingresso del Castello. La mostra è semplicemente divisa in due, dentro e fuori, e questa è l'unica cosa semplice. Nelle sale del Castello non c'è niente da vedere, si domanda e si prega secondo la forma linguistica della liturgia, ma fuori si comanda e si ordina perché l'oggetto è magico, è una "statua abitata", un'anima evocata e attratta o costretta nella statua. Tu conosci la tradizione ermetica e lo diresti un talismano. infatti è così. Non ho fatto un monumento al diavolo, è come una protezione a misura di castello, il suo nome è Pazuzu, figliodi Hanpa, signore dei maligni spiriti del vento che ammala. Ha la testa di un molosso con corna di antilope, quattro ali a governare i venti. la coda di uno scorpione e le zampe di un grosso rapace, e un serpente è il suo organo genitale. Così abbianto intrecciato l'idolo pagano al grande marchio del design industriale; non posso smettere di pensarci, è un Goodgriefer, molto più di Brandon-mosca.

LC: All'interno delle sale è previsto un intervento sonoro basato su uno strumento della tipologia della lira, anche se con una condatura greca (che, come mi hui detto, Pitagora aveva preso dai Babilonesi).

RC: Ho immaginato una lamentazione corale per la caduta di Ninive (609 a.C.), prima dell'epilogo ad Harran. Una lamentazione generata dai tre anni peggiori del primo impero alla conquista del mondo. Gli assiri erano massacratori. Gli studi televisivi si sono liberati di un pesante tavolo da lavoro che abbiamo attrezzato come laboratorio di falegnameria filosofica. Ho costruito decine di sistri, su modello egizio e semitico, e altre cose che non saprei come chiamare; poi ho convinto Alessandra che eravamo pronti a ricostruire la grande lira del Pozzo della Morte di Ur e lei mi ha convinto a parlame con un liutato. L'originale ha quasi cinquemila anni. Era esposta al museo di Baghdad, ma è stata distrutta durante il conflitto, qualche anno fa. Il liutaio ha accettato l'incarico. Gli abbiamo fornito del materiale video di grandi begene etiopi; io ho ricavato le dimensioni con qualche equazione e ho fatto un disegno. Dario Pontiggia è uno dei pochi specialisti di arpe barocche e il mio progetto gli è sembrata una cyclette. Ci ha chiesto di trovare le immagini radiografiche e i dettagli di tutti i lavori di restauro su altre lire dello stesso periodo. Abbiamo procurato il legno di cedro e le corde in budello di pecora, e il risultato è che la grande lira risuona e vibra come il muggito di un bue, che è esattamente il suono che deve fare. Il resto è stato più semplice, i corni d'ariete sono su ebay e il suono del grande tamburo sacro è ricavato da un tom tom orientale da parata, una racehetta da badminton, una cassa di vetri rotti e una frusta per elefanti-

LC: So che stai cercando di ricostruire il testo di un salino. Non sappiamo nulla della musica assira, di cui troviamo indiretti indizi nei bassorilievi. È importante che ci sia la filologia alla base di questa una operazione tanto andace, radicale e affascinante quanto apparentemente assurdo? C'è del metodo in questa follia, direbbe Shakespeare.

RC: Li chiamo accessi filologici, però que-

st'opera non è una ricustruzione, è un a congettura. Ci sono testi su piccole tavole d'argilla, non ci sono altri riferimenti diretti nna ne esistono moltissimi solo probabili. C'è sempre stata invece una forma di registrazione attendibile, il rigore liturgico, il timore di offendere la tradizione, cioè l'antica idea religiosa, originale. Il punto di partenza è che le avversità spingono ai doveri del culto, è un'idea che mi illudo di descrivere che per me è il sentimento evolutivamente più avanzato. l'ingiustizia. In questo caso però non posso appoggiarmi a una melodia precisa, perché non c'è traccia di una melodia, c'è traccia di una sensibilità per la melodia, che però non corrisponde neppure all'idea che abbiamo di gradevolezza. Ho ascoltato cantilene funebri giudaiche e vecchie incisioni beduine per mesi; servono solo due settimane per cambiare gusti musicali. Anche la pronuncia dei testi è un'ipotesi, deriva dal-'arabo e dall'ebraico antico. Mi ha aiutato il professor Stefano Seminara da Roma, diverse volte e sempre al telefono. Ho già fatto una canzone zulă e una în Mandarino, non ho imparato niente e questo per me è un risultato. Insisto solo perché so di non saperlo l'are, cioè qualsiasi cosa sia non è roba per musicisti.

LC: Di quanto è ingigantito il piccolo demone del Louvre?

RC: È un Pazuzu da piazza con le proporzioni di Vittorio Emanuele a cavallo, ha un'apertura alare di tre metri e sfiora i sei metri d'altezza. Poteva essere ancora più maleducato: l'idea era di orientare una statua di quartordici metri sul grande terrazzo rivolto a Torino. Pazuzu sarebbe stato visto già da Corso Francia, ma ci sarebbero stati troppi prublemi strutturali e un preventivo ci ha fatto cambiare idea. Ora la sua collocazione è più corretta. Questi oggetti non avevano valoe artistico, erano strumenti magici domestici da appendere fuori dalle porte o sulle culle dei neonati. Per questo la statua ha un grosso

wella jagiar a flança. Sollai» 7005, Halalladian manara, dimensiane imilianta Canrinsy Massimo De Carry Millam. Folio Alexandra Solto.

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anello sulla testa, è fuori scala, ma è solo un piccolo occhiello, non fa parie della creatura, è come un portachiavi.

LC: In effetti appena mi kai parlato di Pazuzu ho pensato a un talismano con funzione apotropaica. Dobbiamo difenderci da lui o abbiamo bisogno della sua protezione? E chi è sosto la sua copertura? Tu, iutil noi, il Castello di Rivoli, il mondo dell'arte?

RC: Se pensassi che c'è una minaccia o che c'è una soluzione dietro a quella statua sarei solo superstizioso. Invece c'è un'attitudine che sembra avere scavalcato ogni proposito della Storia. È un filo rosso che parte dai canoni dei popoli del deserto e arriva agli organigrammi delle multinazionali. Così Pazuzu sembra il Signore delle Tenebre senza che ci sia una ragione. Quella statua in particolare è più vicina al nostro Medioevo che all'iconografia babilonese, e questo non è proprio logico. Dopo gli antichi popoli ci sono stati secoli di iconoclastia, le città della Mesopotamia sono implose e i primi scavi utili sono della metà del XIX secolo. Dopo i persiani la civiltà classica non ha niente di simile, ci sono le chimere o Pan, ma non ci sono i gargoyle. La spiegazione a Pazuzu è che non si tratta di alto artigianato e che la fantasia ha un limite, e si ripete anche senza sapere di ripetersi. Anche i valori religiosi sono limitati, ma Pazuzu è libero dagli imbarazzi della devozione perché è molto più di un'immagine sacrale. Lui è immanente nella sua

immagine, che è il contrario di trascendente; cioè Pazuzu è quella statua.

LC: Il talismano è un congegno che immagine, forma e materiali contribuscono a rendere efficace. Il principio della magia è che il potere dell'immagine esiste perché essa contiene realmente qualcosa dell'idea o della forza che incarna. Il gesto della mano levata, come tu hai notato, può possedere un doppio statuto, di minaccia, per scacciare qualcuno, "vade retro", ma anche di preghiera.

RC: La mia lamentazione non prende nome dall'incipit come dovrebbe. L'ho chiamata Suillakku, la parola accadica che indica la procedura rituale che hai ricordato, la posizione di preghiera con l'avambraccio rivolto verso l'alto e la mano alzata, come uno stop. Era il gesto esorcistico di purificazione o di scongiuro alla cattiva sorte, agli dei della notte e alla stella del mattino, oppure a Nergal. il dio delle sciagure. Aver dilatato il titolo alla mostra, a Pazuzu, è un'altra congettura. Per la letteratura la posizione di Pazuzu è solo "grintosa" e non c'è altro a riguardo. chiesto a Nils dell'Università di Heidelberg, che frequenta questi problemi con più prudenza e non può che confermare la posizione grintosa. Rimane una nostra idea, che la posizione del demone non sembra così spontaneamente grintosa, ma sembra la rappresentazione di quel gesto preciso, un gesto magico e un modo di pregare. Ho già fatto un paio di volte un diavolo nero in posa devozionale, dev'essere un desiderio che torna nei momenti di chiusa tristezza, ma Alessandra è con me, per noi non c'è nulla di strano e un diavolo può anche pregare.

LC: Ricordo che, quando ne abbiamo parlato la prima volta, hai detto una cosa che trovo acutissima: di fronte a questi gesti primari, come appaiono deboli e derivativi i gesti della liturgia cattolica! È per l'intrinseca e originaria forza che hai scelto questa diversa liturgia?

RC: Assolutamente. Non faccio sacrifici al dio Marte, ma bo ritrovato un articolo di Giorgio Manganelli e si sono liberati tanti dubbi sulla dottrina che mi è sempre sembrata sbiadita. Il primo soccorso è il testo CEL Mi sono serviti i libri profetici, gli Oracoli contro le Nazioni, soprattutto il presagio di Naum che, dal tempio di Sion, parla di Ninive come un covo di leoni e un popolo di locuste. Poi, in ogni sua versione, il Pentateuco ci ha travolti e tutto si è appiccicato al resto di tutto e non c'è stato più nient'altro di urgente da fare. Le lingue più antiche sono vicine al significato autentico di ogni cosa e le parole avevano un valore concreto, chiedevano molta attenzione perché una parola sbagliata era un'infrazione che provocava qualcosa di sgradevole, una punizione o la catastrofe. Conoscere i nomi delle divinità era un potere fisico a disposizione,





l'arma più pericolosa. Pronunciare i nomi delle forze significava poterle evocare e poterle usare, e la ripetizione era proporzionale alla volontà di determinare qualcosa. Questi popoli non erano fatalisti, la rappresentazione di uno spirito era l'intenzione precisa di chiamarlo in causa e una formula rendeva il suo potere operativo. Dietro le ali di Pazuzu c'è un'iscrizione sumerica che lo definisce, lo governa, queste sono le basi alla Dottrina dei Nomi. "Non nominare il nome di Dio" è esattamente questa questione. Così abbiamo imparato a distinguere tremila anni fa da quattromila anni fa e da cinquemila anni fa, passando molto tempo a tornare indietro, provando ad avvicinare le cause, che poi sono intuitive perché gli effetti li conosciamo per forza, anche senza saperli spiegare.

LC: In effetti il problema del nome è fondamentale. In tutte le culture ermetiche ed esateriche le parole hanno potere di evocazione. Nella Cabala addirittura un gruppo di lettere in un certo ordine può convocare una presenza, le stesse lettere pronunciate al contrario possono farla scomparire. A questo proposito sarebbe interessante capire quale scritta appare sulle ali di Pazuzu.

RC: "Io sono Pazuzu, figlio di Hanpa, Re dei malvagi demoni Lilu — Io solo scalai l'imponente montagna che tremò e ai venti diretti a Occidente, sotto cui mi accompagnavo, una ad una spezzai loro le ali". È un documento d'identità con la referenza. Lilu so-

no i maligni spiriti del vento gelido e brinoso e la loro origine, rispetto al popolo di Ninive, deve essere il Nord-Est, gli Zagros, perché trovi scritto che questi venti "scendono con violenza dalle montagne provocando il disordine". La Lilitu è come la luna nera, è uno spirito subordinato a Pazuzu, è la vergine infeconda che strangola i bambini, la Lilith del Talmud, che è la prima sposa dell'uomo. Anche la Lamashtu vive nelle montagne, si apposta nelle paludi e procura ai neonati la febbre tifoidea. Non è una Lilu, ma le viene sempre opposto Pazuzu. Se il procedimento è rispettato. l'esito di una cerimonia è l'intervento di Pazuzu che porta la Lamashtu alla terra del non ritorno, all'inferno a mangiare l'argilla. In questo caso Pazuzu è una forma di profilassi oppure una prescrizione terapeutica. Gli oggetti come questo forse erano preparati da chi avvertiva il pericolo, con il procedimento della cera persa; il compito passava al signore del fuoco, il metallurgo, che era un mago perché con la fusione creava qualcosa che prima non c'era, una figura in lega che non veniva dalla natura,

LC: Rispetto all'opera con gli strumenti, che parte ha la musica nel tuo lavono? Mi sembra di ricordare il tema musicale in altre tue opere.

RC: Non la distinguo dal mio lavoro, e ogni volta che la musica ha senso per me è una forma di reclamo. Mei Gui, la mia canzone cinese, è sulle rose che sbocciano in primave-

Da sinistra: foto di documentazione della resilizzazione dell'opera Pazuzo, 2008. Foto: Alessandra Softa: Pazuzo, 2008. Pasta epossidica, vernice a solvente, libra en vetroresina, polistirana, acciaio, 595 x 296 x 250 cm. Courtesy Massimo De Carlo, Milano, Foto: Paolo Pellion.

ra, ma la sua storia è la storia di aspettative civili impedite dal programma politico della Repubblica Popolare. Le idee dividono e le religioni dividono meglio del petrolio, perché partono da presupposti diversi, oppure perché il presupposto comune è una negazione, non avere altro Dio. Una lamentazione mi è sembrata la forma arcaica della canzone di protesta, così come il patto dell'alleanza è un contratto di protezione militare. In questo senso e'è un aspetto del misticismo che non può dividere per definizione e deriva dalla sensazione di avere un destino comune, di dover condividere la paura. Si direbbe "mistero", ma in fondo è paura e paranoia, perché se gli dei si allontanano dagli uomini, allora certi spiriti si avvicinano. Quello che ho fatto è un canto liturgico di lutto e di afflizione, sono voci sconsolate di un popolo che si sente abbandonato e ha bisogno di riunirsi a soffrire.

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