

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST. EFFERVESCIBLE.
SEEKING ONGOING RELEVANCY.

9th CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art Curators. 2019.



CONTINENTAL

BREAKFAST EFFERVESCENT

Ninth CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art Curators

edited by Giuliana Carbi Jesurun



Trieste Contemporanea 2019

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VENICE
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9TH MAY 2019

TRIESTE
STUDIO TOMMASEO
CEI GENERAL SECRETARIAT
25-26TH OCTOBER 2019

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EFFERVESCIBLE.
SEEKING
ONGOING
RELEVANCY.

CONTINENTAL
BREAKFAST 2019
AT THE VENICE FORUM
FOR CONTEMPORARY ART
CREATORS FROM CENTRAL
AND EASTERN EUROPE

ALLA MAGNA
ACADEMY AUDITORIUM
THURSDAY, 9TH MAY 2019
14.30 - 18.30

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EFFERVESCENT.
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9TH CEI VENICE FORUM
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The Forum is a CEI Feature Event and a Continental Breakfast project. / It is conceived and organised by the Trieste Contemporanea Committee in cooperation with the CEI-Central European Initiative and in collaboration with the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice. / The event is being held under the patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e per il turismo, the CEI - Central European Initiative, the Regione del Veneto, the Trieste

Town Council, the Ca' Foscari University and the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, the University of Trieste. / It is supported by the CEI, the Regione autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia and the BEBA Foundation of Venice. / Special collaborations in Venice: Juliet Art Magazine, Compagnia della Vela. / Special collaborations in Trieste: Trieste International Foundation for Freedom and Progress of Science, in the framework of proESOF2020 activities, and Juliet Art Magazine. /

ABOUT THE FORUM

The CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art Curators is a biennial event, to be held in close connection with the opening of the Venice Biennale. The Forum deals with cultural promotion and the exchange of curatorial experiences. It is open to Central Eastern European experts and curators as well as to the national commissioners of the Venice Biennale for the pavilions of CEE countries.

The event is organised by the Trieste Contemporanea Committee under the auspices of the CEI-Central European Initiative which, after an experimental edition in 2001, in 2003 adopted the Venice Forum as one of its Feature Cultural Events.

The Forum is an activity of the international network "Continental Breakfast" that promotes partnership projects and multidimensional capacity building exchange programmes in the field of contemporary art in CEE.

The Venice Forum is held in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe located in Venice (BRESCE), Venice Ca' Rezzonico Museum of 18th century - Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia and the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice.

Since 2011 and after "The Fragile Pedestal" seminar for Young European Art Historians, a Session of the CEI Venice Forum has been regularly held in Trieste in autumn; in addition to a discussion on the Forum topics, it offers updates on artists, artworks and curatorial projects from all around Europe

and Friuli Venezia Giulia Region.

2019: THE FORUM 9TH EDITION

Under the title "EFFERVESCIBLE, SEEKING ONGOING RELEVANCY" 2019 CEI Venice Forum proposed a debate on a subject that the organizers consider to be very topical in art curation and criticism to create a preview-map of what will be of relevance in the contemporary art debate in 2019-2020, thus collecting ongoing curatorial concepts, activities and proposals by international curators over this two-year period. Does a shared definition of relevance exist in contemporary art today? The opportunity of bringing together many different voices of Forum speakers in search of a current definition of the principle of RELEVANCE seems today very challenging also in a more general interpretative perspective.

On 9 May 2019 at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice the speakers Maja Ćirić (Serbia), Alicia Knock (curator of the Albanian Pavilion, Biennale Arte 2019), Neva Lukić (Croatia/The Netherlands), Beral Madra (Turkey), Roberto Paci Dalò (Italy/San Marino), Ana Peraica (Croatia), Raluca Voinea (Romania) and Janka Vukmir (Croatia) told the audience from which point of view they are looking at the facts of today's contemporary art and explained why, in their opinion, this is an important point of view to deal with nowadays. They suggested artists they are particularly interested in. They pointed to what they consider currently effervescent, to significant new trends. They also shared the ongoing actions

they consider as good public policy for contemporary art and what in their opinion should not be overlooked.

2019 subject is a window on the future, therefore in Venice Trieste Contemporanea wanted to pay close attention to the thoughts and opinions of young art curators.

It did so by inviting to the Forum four of the young Italian curators from the workshops of the perfect “Q-Rated” training project by Rome Quadriennale – Matteo Binci, Lucrezia Calabrò Visconti, Giulia Civardi and Chiara Ianeselli – as well as Thomas Ba (Italy), Sabina Damiani (Slovenia/Croatia), Jakub Gawkowski (Poland/Hungary), Veronica Mazzucco (Italy) and Nataša Radojević (Serbia), winners of the Open Call for under 35 young curators in Central and Eastern Europe specifically launched by Trieste Contemporanea in collaboration with Juliet art magazine. The five young European professionals stood out among the many candidates for their answers given to eight questions asked to participate in the selection (among which for example: From which point of view are you looking at the facts of today’s contemporary art? / What effervescible is there in the air, which significant new trends? / What is positively new in the last years development of the art world/ system? / What ongoing action you know you would define good public policy for contemporary art?).

Both groups of young curators had the opportunity to meet international curators and experts and share their thoughts with them.

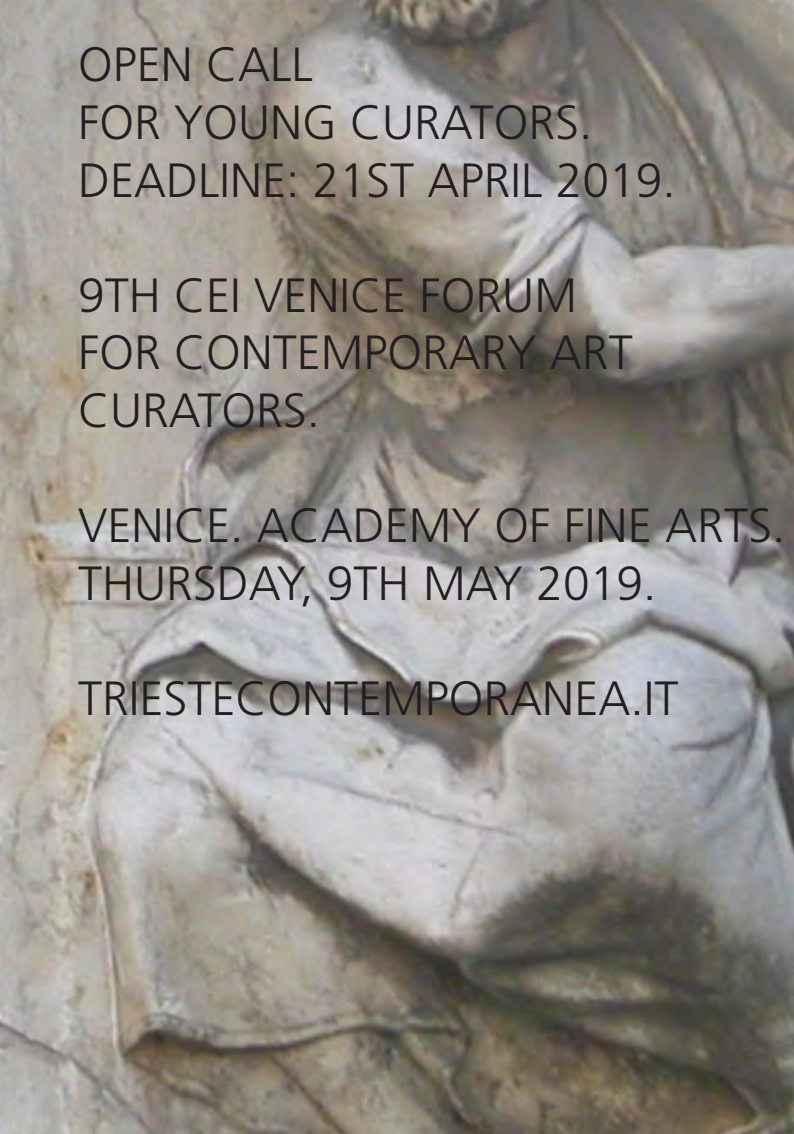
The Trieste Session - which was held at the premises of the CEI General Secretariat and at Studio Tommaseo on 25-26 October 2019 - was dedicated to the contributions on 2019 topic by Giulia Iacolutti (Italy), Giovanni Leghissa (Italy), Andrea Hummer (Austria) and Suzana Milevska (Macedonia), and included an Italian Interdisciplinary panel discussion featuring Paolo Tassinari, member of AGI Alliance Graphique Internationale; Paolo Cammarosano, president of CERM (European Centre for Medieval History Research); Guido Comis, director of ERPAC (Regional Institute for the Cultural Heritage of Friuli Venezia Giulia); Roberto Paci Dalò, artist and professor at the University of the Republic of San Marino; Giulio Polita, architect, and Giuliana Carbi Jesurun.

The second working day was entirely dedicated to representatives of European institutions for contemporary art and science, Trieste International Foundation for Freedom and Progress of Science, the Central European Initiative and Trieste Contemporanea. They met in camera to define "BOTH WAYS", an international art and science project, due to be co-produced in 2020 for the Science in the City Festival in the framework of Trieste ESOF2020 (EuroScience Open Forum). The working group included Miruna Amza, science communicator at Scientifica in Cluj (Romania); Anna Bálványos from the Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art in Budapest; Maja Ćirić, art curator in Belgrade; Dobrivoje Lale Erić from the Center for the Promotion of Science in Belgrade; Ingeborg Fülepp from the Academy of Applied Art of the University of Rijeka (Croatia); Barbara Fabro, CEI senior officer; Paola

Rodari, Anna Lisa Cesaro, Giulia Riosa and Laura Busato from ESOF2020 Science in the City Festival, and Giuliana Carbi Jesurun.

GCI





OPEN CALL
FOR YOUNG CURATORS.
DEADLINE: 21ST APRIL 2019.

9TH CEI VENICE FORUM
FOR CONTEMPORARY ART
CURATORS.

VENICE. ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS.
THURSDAY, 9TH MAY 2019.

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Giuliana Carbi Jesurun is a contemporary art historian and curator based in Trieste, Italy. Professor of history of contemporary art at the University of Trieste up to 1991, she is the director of the Studio Tommaseo in Trieste and the president of Trieste Contemporanea, committee that she co-founded in 1995. Beside her research and curatorial work, she co-ordinates international recurring events – among which, from 2001, the CEI Venice Forum for Contemporary Art Curators.

Walk Overlooking the Mountains.

by Giuliana Carbi Jesurun

Mountains are reliefs with respect to a specific comparison parameter. They are an elevated area on earth average surface.

If the earth is the background of events (art events, in this case), how can the mountains, i.e. comparatively relevant events, be recognized?

The question of 2019 Forum stems from some remarks of the Italian historian Giorgio Negrelli on how to conduct “a selective operation in the boundless expanse of facts”. The relevance of a fact, according to dictionary, is given by its being “of considerable importance or even gravity, especially with regard to a purpose”.

A historian, who already has in hand the outcomes, is so to speak favoured in distinguishing as specifically important, therefore relevant “that” fact as compared to other facts under study. What about an art curator – who wants not only to record an ongoing trend or an artistic fashion as an art critic does, but also to show a possible scale of relevance in real time? How does he use his tools, what criteria does he adopts

(and how does he renew them when needed) to intercept the possible relevance of an artistic fact, its potentially achievable effects in today's world?

Then there is another problem: to "make a ranking", a selection of relevancies, events of the same kind need to be ranged in a line, just like mountains ranges where one can easily identify the highest peak. Hence the profile of the contemporary art curator with his sensitivity, that puts him halfway between the historian and the critic. Therefore, the quality of a curator's proposals (whether they follow continuity or rupture) lies in his ability to observe contemporary events and understand their importance related to near past events (i.e. the positions of previous generations).

To this regard the book by Filiberto Menna *La linea analitica dell'arte moderna. Le figure e le icone* (1975 / the analytical line of modern art, figures and icons) provides a model to line up art events: the "line" introduced by the Italian scholar stands out superbly logical and powerful.

In his perfect and always up-to-date *The Shape of Time* (1962) George Kubler said that "When an important work of art has utterly disappeared by demolition or dispersal, we still can detect its perturbations upon other bodies in the field of influence". Very interesting.

In the history of ancient and modern art the "line" and "height" were quite clearly distinguishable in a linear progression of problems, which remained internal problems

to the technology and language of art. For example, Decio Gioseffi stated that Piero della Francesca's perspective "fundamentalism" leaves no room for doubts or trials and becomes a "public fact", a bold problem-solving milestone in universal art history: "After Piero nobody will paint as if Piero had not existed. After Piero nobody will feel the need to paint like him".

In terms of linear path, art had changed already in the nineteenth century and became extremely complicated in the early twentieth century.

For our purposes it is very interesting the direct influence, the change of perspective on art discourse of contemporary American artists offered by George Kubler's theory, that might be defined a theory of legitimate leaps. I believe that, besides Kubler's wish to find a historical-anthropological interpretation of art (the right short circuit activated by the "coincidence" of being a pupil of Henri Focillon is not to be underestimated), in view of gaining a wider framework of understanding of the new contemporary complexity he was immersed in, the American scholar concentrated on "sequences" and proved with all evidence the importance that they are open, they can be started again and carried forward at any historical point, gradually enriched by the knowledge acquired all around, thus different from when last used.

When (at the very beginning of Pop Art) George Kubler wondered "What is now valid: the isolated work in its total physical presence, or the chain of works marking the known

range of its position?”, contemporary art world was different from now and, so to say, quite orderly, because the different sequences were still distinguishable, they were still more or less similar to his “formal sequences”, and the art discourse was still within the boundaries of art language.

However, soon afterward, conceptual art was once and for all legitimizing what would have been unacceptable before: the formal relevance of the work of art lost its importance in favour of the maximum relevance now given to the concept, the idea of the work. In his essay *Art After Philosophy* (1969) Joseph Kosuth stated that the traditional art historical discourse had reached its end and art had to work on its cultural significance, rather than on forms, thus transforming itself into a meaningful action of cultural creation.

“Being an artist now,” Kosuth outlined, “means to question the nature of art”.

Moving to the present time... about thirty years later, a last attempt to classify according to traditional criteria the main thoughts on artistic production in the second half of the twentieth century was made by Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz. In their *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art. A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings* (1996) the two authors drew a clear line under the issue, at the end of a century-long questioning the nature of art and in full postmodern times dismantling the concept of totality.

Interestingly, the book was published in 1996, a year widely

accepted as the final year of birth of people belonging to the new Millennial generation (range 1981–1996). Those young people who grew up as digital natives in the aftermath of postmodernism (the two elements are apparently in conflict today...) are the artists and art curators now “in charge”. The young curators’ contribution to the Forum highlights that the centre of relevance has now moved outside the artistic field; art actions are now single units connected with “external” issues, for example environmental or gender issues, that they support with a sort of new spirit of service, also by means of a collective action, in minority groups or in cross-party movements. The artist may use all the means at his disposal, in a scenario of multiple parts, so that his body of work can be very diversified; rather than questioning the nature and language of art, parameters of fluidity and flexibility intervene in a new soft declination of activism, suitable for our era and very different from the social and political activism of the analog technology seventies and eighties. Today, after that art had been questioned its role for almost a century, the daily present time has radically changed, and together the perception of the relationship between cultural production and society has changed (although probably it is a less critical view than in the past). For many factors that would be long to list (but where our new social communication habits lie, supported by technology development), our attention span has decreased. Defining the attributing value on the relevance of events is now quite unfeasible. We have a digital swarming behaviour, as the

Korean philosopher Byung-Chul Han told us; we get excited for a campaign to save a canary in our neighbourhood, as it strikes us individually, it is closer to us, it is less boring, rather than fighting against wars in the world... We are not even aware that we put two events of a different kind on the same level; after all wars are definitely very far from our neighbourhood.

Living in the immense liquid “noise” and “swarm” of the global internet world for the young curators at the Forum in replying to our question it was crucial moving outward, so to say, rather than starting from art.

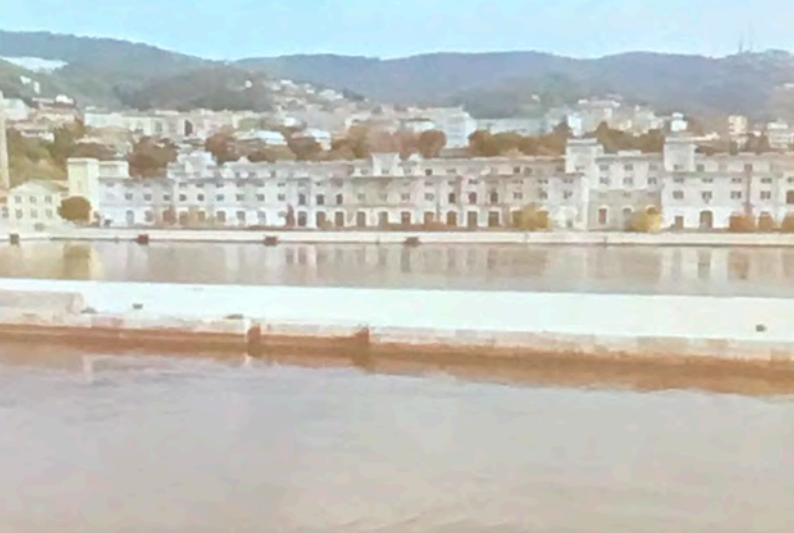
Better young artists and art curators learn from their grandparents and fathers the progressive dematerialization of art to which the conceptual research of the idea leads and the flaws that the postmodern age finds in *grands récits*, better they move towards an even more impervious goal than that of their predecessors, along an unprecedented path: they look for elements of relevance no longer in the sequence of art events, not even in an art theory, but testing the ability of their language tools to adapt to given external/mass common issues while maintaining magic and wonder. It is no longer a matter, as for the Old Masters, of starting from a restricted subject imposed by the client, beyond which the work of art could go amplifying itself and aspire to “universality”. It is rather a challenge: after abolishing for several decades (since Pop-times of Kubler’s remarks on the history of things) every distinction between the “high” products of culture and those

of mass culture, it is the latter, now even transformed into a global one (and more and more in an internet of things), to govern the game of relevance. So, art professionals have to try a “participatory” new vision of art, the one possibly changing cultural creation in a community-based service.

Interestingly at this point, optimism on the possible new mountains that can now be seen on this horizon lies in the below reply of curator Maria Vassileva to my question “What effervescible is there in the air, which significant new trends?”, that I asked her in an interview for “Juliet” art magazine: “I am glad that we overcame the extremes and that contemporary art is getting rid of the tendency to become ordinary propaganda, where there is everything but art. I like the positions that are defended with artistic means and the image is leading, not the added text. I like the overflow of genres, as with the Lithuanian Pavilion in Venice this year. The organizers and the participants showed a serious public position, but the way they did it was amazingly exciting.”

Giuliana Carbi Jesurun and CEI senior executive officer Barbara Fabro welcoming participants to the Forum in Venice.





tavolo del dialogo
/ dialogue



A view of the Venice speakers' table.



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DRIVANT ZENELI

Albanian Pavilion 2019
58th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia

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Suzana Milevska.





Suzana Milevska is a theorist and curator of art and visual culture from North Macedonia. Her research and curatorial interests include postcolonial theory and critique of representational regimes of hegemonic powers, feminist and participatory art, and projects by Romani artists. She holds a Ph.D. in Visual Cultures from Goldsmiths College London and she received a Fulbright Senior Research Scholarship. Milevska was Endowed Professor at the Academy of Fine Art in Vienna in Central and South Eastern European Art Histories. From 2016 to 2019 she was Principal Investigator of the project TRACES (Horizon 2020) and curated the exhibition "Contentious Objects/Ashamed Subjects", Polytechnic University Milan. In 2012 Milevska won the Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory.

Relevancy, Relativity, and Positionality.

by Suzana Milevska

ABSTRACT: Seeking for art that sticks out for its pertinence and bears more relevance than the rest assumes certain decisiveness and normativity. It calls for a comparison and evaluation that has always been the most challenging for art criticism - establishing the evaluation criteria and norms – because art's aims have been always defined exactly as focused on defying such norms. If one admits that the myriad of artistic positions impose countless possibilities and starting criteria the main question is how to evaluate the certain art's relevance – e.g. from which position and in comparison to which counterpart. Additional question important to be addressed is whether certain regions call for different criteria of relevance because this could essentialise certain cultural contexts and could relativise even furtherer the issue of relevance. Nevertheless, to locate, evaluate and claim the relevance of certain art phenomenon might not be so difficult after all if one takes into account the burning questions that may extend the art's influence far beyond the local and regional borders, e.g. when art addresses the environmental crisis, the neoliberal appropriation of common wealth, or

the recent problematic equalisation between fascism and anti-fascist movements in the official EU political discourse. In my presentation I want to argue that it's crucial to make clear the socio-political and economic position from which the call for evaluating the relevance is launched. How art can affect the endurance and transformation of our understanding of the relation between art and society is directly related to the plea for instituting the relevance as one of the important criteria for evaluating art and this call seems viable, necessary, and even urgent. The recent problematic equalisation between fascism and anti-fascist movements in the official EU political discourse. In my presentation I want to argue that it's crucial to make clear the socio-political and economic position from which the call for evaluating the relevance is launched. How art can affect the endurance and transformation of our understanding of the relation between art and society is directly related to the plea for instituting the relevance as one of the important criteria for evaluating art and this call seems viable, necessary, and even urgent.

RELEVANCY Interdisciplinary Italian panel discussion in Trieste:
CEI General Secretariat, 25 October 2019.

from left: Paolo Tassinari, member of the AGI Alliance
Graphique Internationale; Paolo Cammarosano, CERM
president (European Centre for Medieval History Research);
Guido Comis, director of the ERPAC Villa Manin; Roberto Paci
Dalò, artist and professor at the University of the Republic of
San Marino (chair).

+ Giulio Polita, architect, and Giuliana Carbi Jesurun, art
historian and curator.





BOTH WAYS working group in Trieste: Studio Tommaseo, 26 October 2019.

The Forum Trieste Session hosted the representatives of European institutions of contemporary art and science, and of the Trieste International Foundation for Freedom and Progress of Science, the Central European Initiative and Trieste Contemporanea. They met in camera to define BOTH WAYS, an international art and science project, due to be co-produced in 2020 for the Science in the City Festival in the framework of next Trieste's ESOF2020 (EuroScience Open Forum). The working group included: (from left here) Laura Busato from ESOF2020 – Science in the City Festival, Miruna



Amza, science communicator at Scientifica in Cluj (Romania), Paola Rodari from ESOF2020 – Science in the City Festival, (from left in the following page) Dobrivoje Lale Erić from the Center for the Promotion of Science in Belgrade, Barbara Fabro, CEI senior officer, Lisa Cesaro from ESOF2020 – Science in the City Festival.

+ Anna Bálványos from the Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art in Budapest, Giuliana Carbi Jesurun from Trieste Contemporanea, Maja Ćirić, art curator in Belgrade, Ingeborg Füllepp from the Academy of Applied Art – University of Rijeka (Croatia), Giulia Riosa from ESOF2020 – Science in the City Festival.







Raluca Voinea.





Raluca Voinea is a curator and an art critic based in Bucharest, Romania. She has been co-director of tranzit.ro (part of the tranzit.org network) since 2012 and a co-editor of IDEA arts + society magazine since 2008. She was the curator of the Romanian Pavilion in Venice in 2013, with the project "An Immaterial Retrospective of the Venice Biennale", presenting Romanian artists Alexandra Pirici and Manuel Pelmus.

A List of some Advice and Desirable Practices for Today's Art World.

by Raluca Voinea

A list of desirable practices, advice and criteria that are relevant for today's art world - based on personal observations collected over time as well as on a 7-years of practice in a space that has a gallery, a garden, a kitchen, an outside oven, a library, chaise-longs, a transdisciplinary programme and an open door for different communities.

- Pay artists and cultural workers decent fees;
- Stop outsourcing creativity and research from peripheries to consume in the rich capitals; respect the long-term investment of local workers in creating lively artistic scenes from the crumbs of their precarious contexts and don't cherry pick without giving something back;
- In biennials and big exhibitions, for every artist financially supported by a rich country, get another one who doesn't have the same chances; do not select artists by the power and financial capital of their galleries;
- Guarantee gender parity, at least, and be open to issues of

representation; be aware of cultural appropriation;

- Respect other people involved in the production of contemporary art; do not exploit; if you are in a higher position, treat people like colleagues, not like employees;
- Do not talk about climate change in plastic boxes, do not create expensive installations for works which deal with poverty and social injustice; recycle from one exhibition to the next; be consistent also in form;
- Enjoy popular culture and amateur art;
- Pay respect to the indigenous practices;
- Do not have people of colour guarding white artists' works; do not let all the migrant personnel in the kitchen while the elites are talking latest politics at the dinner table;
- If you are a native English-speaking person, try to learn fluently at least another language; if you don't speak English, try to learn at least the basics of it, so that you can communicate with other non-English speaking people; be contextual when practicing anti-colonial critique; check your privilege but pay attention to whom you are asking to check theirs;
- If you own more than one property, try to host some artists for free from time to time; if you own many properties, you should be sensible and withdraw from the art world, you don't belong there, go and live with the new feudal and decorate your properties with hunting trophies, not with contemporary art;
- Try not to preach; it is difficult (I am sort of preaching myself right now), but you can teach yourself how to do it;

- Do your own research; quote and credit properly the ideas and statements that you use;
- Cultivate vegetables and plant fruit trees; grow house plants and take care of pets;
- If you are permanently employed in an art institution, remember you are there to make visible the work of the artists;
- Stand up for artists rights; be in solidarity with other workers, with marginal people, with refugees and migrants;
- Art is relevant for those who have access to it, so work towards increasing access to art and culture for more people;
- Clean the floor of your gallery or museum, at least from time to time, it is therapeutic;
- Ask people not only what they do, but also how they do it;
- Understand technology and use it with awareness;
- If you invite artists for exhibitions, treat them well, create space for them, open possibilities;
- If you are an artist invited for an exhibition, try not to act as if the whole world is there to serve you; some modesty didn't kill anyone;
- Don't accessorize your work with the works of other artists;
- Smile, be committed, make jokes, be serious, eat together, work together;
- Appreciate where you live and work towards making it better.

The list stays open.

Neva Lukić.





Anti-semitism is a killing kill
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Photo: Fa...

Neva Lukić is a curator and writer living between Croatia and The Netherlands. She got a degree in art history and archaeology from the University of Zagreb, and in theory of modern and contemporary art from the Leiden University. She has professional experience in museum curatorship (Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka), as a freelance curator (Croatian Association of Artists - Zagreb, Arti et Amicitiae - Amsterdam, See Lab - The Hague, etc.) and as an art critic (active member of Croatian section of AICA, Kontura Art Magazine). She has participated in various residencies and programs, latest including Het Wilde Weten in Rotterdam (2018), and What Could/Should Curating Do (2018) for which she was supported by Mondriaan Foundation.

Recognizing the Language.

by Neva Lukić

This presentation deals with the spatial, political and ideological aspects of language and text, and is based on some of the examples of projects, either carried out or future exhibitions/programs and consequently, particular works of visual artists. The approach is interdisciplinary, because not only does it deal with the visual contemporary arts, but it is also partially rooted in the literary perspective.

As both a curator and poet/writer, living between Croatia and the Netherlands, I am interested in the phenomenon of the cross-border interactions and identities and intercultural exchanges. By practising interdisciplinary approach towards art and exhibition organisation I tend to connect the curatorial with the writing/literary practice. It could be said that lately the focus has been on "the space", "the narrative", "the identity" and "the language", wriggling throughout both practices. Different aspects of the topic will be approached from the following points of view, focusing both on Western and South-East European (Balkan) perspective of necessity to research into the issue of language.

The approaches are the following:

– Recognition of language as an expression - problematizing ethics, censorship and artistic freedom in the art world - the

program to be conducted in the art initiative *See Lab*, The Hague, from October 2019 to October 2020.

– Language as a text in creating two dimensional and three dimensional spaces in the works of contemporary visual artists. [1]

– Language as a mother tongue and ideological means - the example of Croatian language which was cleaned out of Serbian words after the Balkan war. [2]

– Potential future research to be conducted (+ a piece of theatre play on which the author is currently working in collaboration with writer Viktor Radonjić).

/ Language as an expression.

I belong to the generation born in the 80s which had experienced ex-Yugoslavia, which grew up in the independent state of Croatia, and in the last 6 years the country has also become a European Union member. In addition, with the fall of the Berlin wall, the world changed, globalization, capitalism and technological revolution started to flourish. All these changes in my life, which is neither too short nor too long, also influence my perspective on contemporary art, and the way I should behave and act in this world as a curator, an art professional or a writer/artist. It could be said that I was raised on the heritage of avant-garde and socialist movements, which nourished a romantic approach towards art, but during my professional development, the situation and the perspective of (contemporary) art has changed, so suddenly art has become “project making” and numbers and statistics

have become a measure of success, so it is almost as if one had lost track of which direction to direct oneself within the art world.

Out of this and similar questions the project *Recognizing the language* arises, which is to be conducted at the *See Lab* art initiative from fall 2019 until fall 2020. It deals with the issue of the power and weakness of the artistic voice in the globalized world, with the omnipresent problem of “the non recognition of the language.” Among others, it has been inspired by the article *Freedom of Censorship* of Israeli architect and visual artist Yazan Khalili who, speaking about the case of censorship in Israel, quotes one artist whose work was censored, and who screamed in a whispering scream: “Finally, finally they took my work seriously...!”. [3]

In addition, it is also inspired by Boris Groys’s theses about the differences between the regimes based on economic structures (the medium of money-numbers), and the ones based on politics and ideology (the medium of language), therefore also a discrepancy between different approaches towards art. Groys also writes about the change in our understanding of authorship in art. He re-examines the disappearance of artistic subjectivity in art and the loss of individuality of the artist. For Groys, the attribution of authorship today is seen as a creation of the institution of art, of the art market, and of art critics, in order to profit commercially from art stars. [4]

Although the question of responsibility or cultural appropriation has recently raised dust in the art world, the question whether the artist who is white has the right to

speaking about the problems of the Africans, or whether the artist / curator who is not an immigrant has the right to make exhibitions on the topic of immigration crises (Katarina Gregos, 2017) [5], with these questions, in some way, we are still heading one step ahead.

With this project, the See Lab aims to invite artists to think critically about the economically structured system and themselves operating within it, and open up the spaces for new ideas and new directions within the art (world). How to find the space where language still can be recognized and heard? Does that space exist if there is officially no censorship? What with art subsidies and bureaucracy which dictate the way in which our projects are conducted? Is censorship still present, but in a very hidden, perfidious way? Is the space of the recognition of language even possible, if we still want to remain "connected" in the techno-globalized world, or does this space become utopia?

The program also includes the collaboration with Zagreb gallery Greta. It is interesting to juxtapose two countries like Croatia and the Netherlands for the exchange of knowledge and debate. The Netherlands is a country with a longstanding and one of the oldest market economies in the world, while Croatia is in the phase of post-socialist transitional capitalism. The Netherlands is a multicultural country, which is also proved by the different cultural backgrounds of artists participating in this program, while Croatia is more homogeneous.

Artists: Anke van den Berg (See Lab), Jonathan Reus (See Lab),

duo ODDKIN (See Lab), Cathleen Owens (See Lab), Jorick de Quaasteniet (See Lab), Jan Adriaans + one Croatian artist to be selected.

/ Language as a relation between the space and the text.
The exhibition made in collaboration with Vanja Babić in 2018. The exhibition problematized the descriptive, formal, symbolic, psychological and sociological aspects of the text in creating two-dimensional and three-dimensional spaces in the works of contemporary visual artists. It questioned whether and to what extent – in the context of globalization, virtualization and migration processes – the lexical, i.e. linguistic basis still conditions the narrative and imaginative determinants of shaping, or better yet, describing specific spatial situations. In this context it was important to have the representatives of another language and we exhibited a lot of Austrian artists (the art scene which nourishes the tradition between the word and the image), in order to widen the topic of the exhibition *Words and Images* organized by Soros centre in Zagreb in the 90s, to widen it towards the relation between the text and the space in the manner of describing space or creating space visually, but also to make it international, to some extent. Here I will mention just several works exhibited, which actually made me go one step forward, and this is not anymore the relation between the space and the text, but it focuses more on the issue of language itself as an ideological means (the problem of linguistic discrepancy within ex-Yugoslavia): Antonio Grgić inquires about the lack of language and space

by giving names, in this case to squares - the square currently named The Square of Victims of Fascism, where the Croatian Society of Visual Artists is situated, has changed its name more than five times over the past hundred years, which shows how very important language is in our culture. The name of the square becomes as important as the square itself. Grgić is interested in the time until 1927, when the square was mystically called Square N. Here the mirror metaphorically mirrors the surrounding space, which is just like the name of the square, and hence its (political) meaning, is constantly changing.

Ana Mušćet, on a few thousand meters of phonetic tape, overwrites the words of Krleža's *Flags* (1962), placing this controversial novel in a new time and space-political context. Besides, the novel speaks about the idea of the South Slavic unification which was the hot topic at the end of 19th century.

Therefore, from some of the ideological, geopolitical and sociopolitical aspects of the mentioned exhibition, dealing with the relation between the space and the language, the future branches of research into language will develop.

/ Language as a mother tongue and ideological means.

The project which I would like to develop in the future would be the "sister exhibition" of the latter one where I would go a step further by juxtaposing different artists from former Yugoslav regions (mainly Croatia and Serbia) who work with the text, too. This time the focus would be on "the

inconstant space of the language“, and the “space of reality of the language“ which the mentioned countries share, but which was first, during Yugoslavia, artificially united into Serbo-Croatian, and during the 90s again artificially divided, and the regional language unity was destroyed. The works would be carefully chosen not only by the artistic quality of the artwork, but also by the symbolic, linguistic and political connotation of the words, sentences or the alphabet used in the artwork. It is important to mention that Serbia has lately been strongly forcing a Cyrillic letter, so the regional linguistic discrepancy is becoming even stronger, due to the usage of different scripts. The emblematic work by Mladen Stilinović *An Artist who Cannot Speak English is No Artist* made in 1994 (therefore during the 1990s Balkan Wars) would be used as the centre point of the exhibition: in the 90s, at the time after the fall of the Berlin wall, the globalization started to flourish, and the countries in the Balkans divided and became even smaller linguistically and geographically. With this exhibition I would like to show both the connection and discrepancy between regional and global, transitional and capitalistic, past and present and I would like to use it as a kind of space for the visualization of the disintegrated and dispersed (global®ional) space we live in.

A pack of “Drina“ cigarettes from Bosnia, where the anti-smoking warning “Smoking kills“ is completely identical in all three languages (Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian), the only difference being the Serbian variant written in a Cyrillic script, will be used as another starting point of the project.

/ Conclusion.

I have noticed that many visual artists, in Croatia for instance, deal with the topic of the heritage of monuments and factories in ex-Yugoslavia, but neither in Croatia nor in Serbia (I spent 3 months in Serbia, participating in the curatorial program *WCSCD*, so I researched the art scene), there are many artists dealing with the issue of the language as ideology in the geographical space of ex-Yugoslavia. Perhaps because of Stilinović's statement? Artists do work on the borders of words and images, but in many cases they use English words.

I find language essentially important, because, exactly as Hannah Arendt said in the famous interview with Günter Gaus: "What remains, language remains" – language is the present, while architecture in this case is always a kind of representation of the past. As Arendt claims, "the meaningfulness we experience in our mother tongue is disclosive of the most fundamental features of human existence", and it should be used as a kind of antidote to the dehumanizing forces of totalitarianism (Gaffney, 2015). [6] To finish the presentation I am going to present a short excerpt from the text which I wrote in collaboration with the writer Viktor Radonjić, which deals with the expulsion of Serbian words from the Croatian language. I wrote it because I think that the purity of a mother tongue is not good, we should remain open to, as Derrida calls it, "the linguistic exile", and to the neverending task of translation.

The language – a step forward, although the boundaries have been for centuries imposed on it. History is being repeated as the past. With words, in spite of being identical; with Serbian names which have forcibly become informers. Words-informers, on which interventions have been conducted, which have been raped and transformed, which underwent electric shock treatment so that they are never again the same!

“We do not want to hear about that word ever again! Take it away! Pluck it out!”, they shouted, and in the empty spaces the newly composed words sat, the words of pure Croats! (in a more tired tone). Both these informer and newly composed words are loud, they are always heard, they are louder than the entire language; they become more important than sentences, than conversations, than meanings, they stick out, and they become concentration camps.

[1] *(In)constancy of Space - Spaces of Narrative and Imagination* exhibition, Croatian Association of Artists, Zagreb, 2018.

[2] balkaninsight.com/2017/03/30/post-yugoslav-common-language-declaration-challenges-nationalism-03-29-2017/.

[3] Yazan Khalili, *Freedom of Censorship*, published in: *On Boycott, Censorship and Educational Practices*, Renata Cervetto (ed), de Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam 2015, p. 17.

[4] Boris Groys, *Multiple Authorship, The Art Power*, MIT Press 2008, p. 96.

- [5] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2PAz1LFweM> – Katarina Gregos, lecture in Castrum Pelegrini, Amsterdam-Freedom of Art versus Political Correctness, March 17th 2019.
- [6] www.academia.edu/11410925/Can_a_Language_Go_Mad_Arendt_Derrida_and_the_Political_Significance_of_the_Mother_Tongue: *Can a Language Go Mad? Arendt, Derrida, and the Political Significance of the Mother Tongue*, Jeniffer Gaffney.

Beral Madra.





Beral Madra is a major Turkish art critic and curator. Founding member and honorary president of AICA, Turkey (established 2003), she has been the director of the BM Contemporary Art Center, Istanbul since 1984. Among her leading curatorial activities are the coordination of the 1st (1987) and the 2nd (1989) Istanbul Biennale, exhibitions of Turkish artists in 43rd, 45th, 49th, 50th and 51st Venice Biennale and co-curatorship of "Modernities and Memories-Recent Works from the Islamic World" in 47th Venice Biennale.

Relevance of Truth in Contemporary Art.

by Beral Madra

The current concerns of global economy, politics and culture, that are under the unavoidable hegemony of post-truth is forcing us to re-think at first, on the relevance of truth - which is the main concept and goal of contemporary art - and then, on the relevance of today's Relational Aesthetics productions in the life of global people. We, working in this field, are facing a new challenge to communicate with the large public through contemporary art and activities.

The main setback in discussion this theme/concept is the difference in political-economic systems, despite the reality of globalisation. There are countries and regions which have democracy, justice, human rights etc. and there are countries and regions that are far from these universal truths.

To my regret, this time I have to speak from a country and region which is suffering from a damaged democracy and ruling post-truth. Please forgive me, if I cannot be so positive and cheerful.

Let me ultimately quote Jürgen Habermas: "A 'post-truth democracy' [...] would no longer be a democracy." [1]

Similarly we can say: An artwork would no longer be artwork

in a post-truth democracy, which is no longer democracy. In the non-democratic and non-social political and economic systems there are a series of adverse issues related to the relevance of contemporary art productions and activities of artists and art people towards their audiences. The mass media collaborates with the ruling powers that offer a limited democracy, but it convinces the people that they live in a democracy and that they are effective in ruling the country. The culture and art industry with its populist and financial system and with its strong PR backing, promises an almost selfless service to the society of spectacle, which is again an illusion. The skeptical or dissident artists and art professionals are confronted with this ongoing power.

Fortunately artists and art professionals can see, categorise and mark the apparatuses that serve the post-truth: For example: These adverse apparatuses show the affluent life of the privileged classes to the other classes as the only goal of life and art production is used as “a must” towards this goal. They intervene into the organic communication between the creative people and the public with the intention of converting every piece of this communication into money. They canalise the existing art forms and their critical information through alien systems, and load them with contents that don't belong to them. They convert the quality of art works that have the goal to reach a very large audience into profit and monetary interest. Here, we need a new method to the global art market; probably a determined approach to underline the border between the socio-political-cultural value and the

market value of the artwork. This is more essential in non-democratic countries where only decorative creations can be exhibited and marketed.

In the post-truth order, especially in the countries where democracy is damaged, the Relational Aesthetics products, which make critical and both oppositional visual productions between the truth regime and the post-truth regime, are seen as opposed to the traditional identity, to nationalism, to religion and neo-capitalist mass-culture. These productions are abused by censorship and vandalism. However, these attacks are not preventing the continuity of art production. The curators who stand by artists and their works inevitably take a political stand and provide opportunities for this continuity. In such an adverse environment, a counter-position can be created by empowering the art and culture NGO's and artist initiatives on the global level through official and private investments, by establishing artist residency programs and by encouraging artistic projects with social content. If we consider that Relational Aesthetic artworks have a function within the visual aggression of post-truth, it is evidently the enigmatic visual language that penetrates into the subconscious of the society and provokes an awareness.

[1] Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays*

Ana Peraica / 50 Years of Returning. New Documents on Red
Peristyle (1968). Video.





Roberto Paci Dalò / Darkness Tales.

DEMIA
LE ARTI
EZIA





Alicia Knock / Maybe the Cosmos is not so Extraordinary.
Driant Zeneli. Albanian Pavilion 2019.





Janka Vukmir / It is Relevant to Rebel!





Ana Peraica is the author of "Fotografija kao Dokaz" (Multimedijalni institut, Zagreb, 2018), "Culture of the Selfie" (Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam, 2017) and "Sub/versions" (Revolver, Berlin, 2009). She is also the editor of "Smuggling Anthologies" (MMSU, Rijeka, 2015), "Victims Symptom" (Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam, 2009), and "Žena na raskrižju ideologija" (HULU, Split, 2007). She teaches at MA Media Art Histories program by University of Danube in Krems and on the MA Media Art Cultures (ERASMUS MUNDUS) program by University of Danube, Aalborg, Poznan and Singapore. Peraica lives and works in Split, Croatia.

Roberto Paci Dalò is a director and composer/ performer, a visual and sound artist and a radio hacktivist who leads the group Giardini Pensili. His work has been presented worldwide in biennials, museums, theatres, festivals, and the public space. Winner of the Premio Napoli and recipient of the Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD fellowship. Member of the Internationale Heiner Müller Gesellschaft and the British Cartographic Society. Professor of interaction design at UNIRSM, founder and director of Usmaradio, and expert/ artist at the European Commission.

Alicia Knock is the curator of the Albanian Pavilion, Biennale Arte 2019.

Janka Vukmir is an art historian and an art critic and curator based in Zagreb. She is a co-founder and the director of the Institute for Contemporary Art, Zagreb, after having been the director of the former SCCA Zagreb. She is a member of several international networks, including YVAA – Young Visual Artists Awards and Continental Breakfast, and co-founder of the Radoslav Putar Award. She was also president of CIP – Croatian Independent Publishers.

Maja Ćirić.





Maja Ćirić is an independent curator based in Belgrade and experienced in leading and contributing to international projects. Her logic of practice cannot be defined by the dominant geopolitical structures and their impact on the art world; rather she tries to think about the art world differently, in terms of criticality and post-globalism. Her concerns span from curating as institutional critique through to the research of methodology and epistemology of curating.

Chiara Fumai: From Less Light to Spotlight. A Short Essay on Game Changers and the Changing Art Game.

by Maja Ćirić

This essay was delivered at the Venice Academy of Fine Arts, a former institution for the incurable, in the frame of the Ninth CEI Venice Forum for art curators EFFERVESCIBLE. SEEKING ONGOING RELEVANCY on May 9th, 2019.

The contexts of the Venetian former hospital for the incurable is etymologically connected to curating as of taking care. It provokes context-responsiveness, one of the first postulates of the curatorial. To raise a curatorial question or an argument is relevant only if it resonates with the discourse, with the language that is encountered in the surroundings and its contemporaneity, such as it is in the preview of the 58th International Art Exhibition la Biennale di Venezia. That prerequisite directly pushes us to hereby connect the aspect of the artistic practices, that are initially considered as being incurable and thus can not be easily absorbed within the art

system. They are incurable because these subjects (artists, art practices) embody a rupture and perform certain liminality, in a sense that they cross over the existing boundaries. Having such a character, they bring in a change, and one dares to name them the potential game changers. They can be human subjects, but they can also be non-human subjects such as currents. They both have the potential of transforming the hegemonic state of affairs.

The exhibition *Less Light* of Chiara Fumai took place at the ISCP, New York (from February 12 – May 17, 2019) almost the last place the very artist professionally resided and that was cut short due to personal reasons. Given the fact that the artist decided to cut her life short a couple of months later back in an Italian gallery in 2017. The exhibition is an example of posthumous curating by Kari Conte, Director of Programs and Exhibitions at the ISCP and Francesco Urbano Ragazzi, directors of Chiara Fumai archive. Simultaneously, as if it was a part of a larger current, occurred the exhibition of Hilma Af Klint, another female artist who was dealing with occultism and whose work is, due to her will and other circumstances, exhibited posthumously.

Back to Fumai, as a subject who embodied a rupture by trying to be very precise in creating “the space against oppression”. *Less light* stands for her capacity for speaking in terms of “we” and standing for/embodying other “ruptured” personas whose agency was liminal, described by Conte as “the

marginalized, the freaks, the downtrodden, the exploited, the rebels"[1] and personified in the following: "two Italian women, Eusapia Palladino, a nineteenth-century Spiritualist medium who lived from 1854 to 1918, and Carla Lonzi, a second-wave feminist author and activist. There are twentieth-century political nonconformists such as Rosa Luxemburg, a Marxist revolutionary; Ulrike Meinhof, co-founder of the militant Red Army Faction; and Valerie Solanas. Nineteenth-century P. T. Barnum freak-show performers also inhabit Fumai's work, including silent Circassian beauty Zalumma Agra and "bearded lady" Annie Jones!"

Not only that she performed a rupture in the present time-space continuum, but Fumai also handled assertively the rupture between genders which is obvious in the photographic series *Chiara Fumai reads Valerie Solanas* (2013) in which she impersonates four of the above mentioned female characters in front of the sign "A male artist is a contradiction in itself". By doing so she mobilises Solans' feminist almost militant agency, by vocalising it through different historical characters.

The biggest spatial unit of the exhibition resembles an Ouija board for spirit calling consisting of alphabetical order of letters, a "Yes", a "No", numbers from 0 to 9 and the photos of the transcript of the *Less Light* into the deaf-mute sign language that is surrounded by automatic writing. On the upper front wall stands a big sign Arrivederci. Contrary to single letters, this Italian word translatable into "goodbye"

or “until we meet again” points to the liminality of Fumai’s work, of the necessity to cross over. It can be read twofold, as a meeting on the other side of life or as a meeting elsewhere, in another venue, such as is another simultaneous exhibition of her artworks, at the Italian Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia.

Fumai’s artworks provided content for the one third the Italian Pavilion of the 58th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia under the title *Neither Nor*, that was also posthumously curated by Milovan Forronato, whose persona, due to performing a specific transgender stirred polemics in the conservative Italian circles. Forronato being Fumai’s friend also performs a particular crossing over. In the Pavilion the drawings, from the walls of Fumai’s former studio at the ISCP consisting of symbols and inscriptions, are reproduced. The liminality that she was not able to perform while alive, the dispersive aspect of the rupture, bounced back to the confines of the art world, within its walls but not outside of them. The exhibition at the Pavilion provides for a position of stability and integration of what was otherwise precise yet not coherent: the artwork, the persona, the stability of a position within the art world. What Fumai labelled as an “Anti-World, an alternative, a counter-culture of performance art” becomes the establishment. *Neither-Nor* is justified, it is faithful to the plural ruptures Fumai embodied, but also emerges from the necessity to compromise. It has to have integrity in order

to place the otherwise cannibalised language [2] with the confines of the existing art world. It seems that censoring some parts of her work the emotion is not amplified. [3]

The main question that aims to be answered is if the game changers can perpetuate the changing of the art game?

In the words of late Mark Fisher, the theorist, another public persona who cut his life short, if the human suffering, such as was the one that caused Fumai's rupture, has great potential to be exploited. However, in case of Fumai, and thanks to the curatorial tour de force, otherwise ruptured existence gets the coherence and stability from an art world expertise it gets it into a hand. Liminality becomes comprehensible only as it becomes a part that does not cross-over the limit of a predefined game. The Arrivederci at the ISCP is not a cross-over to the realm of unstructured but sounds like "until we meet again" under the terms of the art world game.

Fumai is Uncura(t)ble as a game changer, yet she becomes curable when she can no longer change the art game. Her artwork can represent another, more realistic value system based on solidarity. However, this change is not a change in the broader infrastructures of the art world.

Perceived from the history of long curatorial duration, the game does not change. It has own rules and regulations, but what values occupy the position changes.

It is when *Less Light* gets to Spotlight that it redefines the quality of the art game. It renders it more fragile.

More important than knowing if Fumai's legacy is integrated into the mechanisms of profitability, it is essential that she remains liminal, remembered, as a subject who embodied a rupture whose "party was deconstruction and who did not love tautologies". By doing so, she represents the art unstructured in its essence, witnessing that a part of it does not belong to the language but to another realm that is gender neutral.

[1] Kari Conte, *CHIARA FUMAI: ART AS A WEAPON, Less Light*, p. 12, https://iscp-nyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Chiara_Fumai_LESS_LIGHT_ISCP_Catalogue.pdf.

[2] "OUR JOB IS NOT ABOUT GIVING ANSWERS, IT'S ABOUT FORMULATING QUESTIONS, CANNIBALIZING LANGUAGE, THE ALPHABET OF THE SAME CULTURE THAT OUR ARTWORKS PUT UP FOR DISCUSSION. WE AREN'T HERE TO PUT EVERYTHING IN ORDER, BUT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS MESS. DECONSTRUCTION IS OUR PARTY" from *LESS LIGHT The demon-possessed woman*, in conversation with Francesco Urbano Ragazzi, https://iscp-nyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Chiara_Fumai_LESS_LIGHT_ISCP_Catalogue.pdf.

[3] "You know when during the peak of a mix the DJ lowers the volume and the audience goes into raptures? In *I Did*

Not Say or Mean 'Warning' we applied the same effect: by censoring some of the spoken parts we amplified the emotion of their transmission." , *ibidem*.

Thomas Ba.
Curator





Thomas Ba is a curator based in Varese, Italy. He gained a bachelor in culture, criticism and curation with a first class honours from Central Saint Martins. He has collaborated since 2016 with Video Sound Art Festival, a new media art festival in Milan.

Digital Phenomenology.

by Thomas Ba

Digital Phenomenology is a research and exhibition project that aims at exploring how human bodies are extending into the digital world and the implications of this extension. It's an attempt to understand the modalities through which contemporary society engages with technology. The starting point was the question "how do human beings experience the digital world?" Given that in the past two decades children and youngsters have been significantly exposed to the internet, video games, augmented and virtual reality investigating this issue is vital to comprehend the current time. Considering the complexity of the matter the objective of the present research is not to produce a comprehensive survey of all the possible relationship between man and the digital, but rather to create a methodological framework that can be used to analyse the latter. In first instance it is important to clarify the meaning of the title. The word phenomenology was used to stress the fact that the digital is experienced in a similar manner - and to a certain extent the same - of the tangible world. As a matter of fact the digital is not to be understood in contraposition to the real or the physical, but as a particular instance of them. On the other hand, digital means composed of digits, more specifically of 0 and 1 the two numbers that

make up the binary code. The latter is at the basis of nearly all the technological devices that are ubiquitous in today's society, in fact the binary code is that system which permits hardware and software to communicate, it is what allows machines to function. However, people do not engage directly with the digital, but they need interfaces such as screens (e.g. phone or laptops screens) to access the information it contains. For this reason there is a crucial factor that is necessary to mention to fully grasp this complex dynamic: the digital body. The latter represents the extension of the body into the digital space in the form of a doubling. Pierre Levy in his 1998 book *Becoming Virtual: Reality in the Digital Age* while describing what happens to the body during a phone call states that: "The telephone separates voice (the audible body) from the 'tangible' body and transmits it to a remote location. My tangible body is here, my audible body, doubled, is both here and there." [1]

There is an extension of the subject into something else, a doubling of the body which occupies multiple places at the same time. This condition, the double that is originated in the digital space, is called the digital body. A practical example was analysed by a research pool in Alicante (Spain), the team was composed by Mel Slater, Daniel Perez-Marcos, H. Henrik Ehrsson and Maria V. Sanchez-Vives. [2]

Twenty-one participants (healthy males, 22 ± 3.9 years old), with their right arm resting on a plane and hidden from their sight, were asked to stand in front of a screen which depicted a virtual arm with the same dimension and position of the non

visible one (subjects were able to adjust the size and location of the digital limb so that it felt as if a part of their body). [3] The participants, while watching on the screen the digital arm being stimulated by a ball, had their right arm touched at the same time and on the same points. The result was that the subjects perceived the digital limb as if it was the tangible one. Researches were thus able to prove that synchronous stimulation induced an illusion which made the subject identify a digital object as if part of their body. Another example of the doubling is the work of Ines Alpha, who makes 3D face filters for social media. Users apply the filters through their smartphones' camera and use them to alter or highlight their face features. In both cases a person can recognize as part of themselves, as an instance of their tangible and psychological self (identity) something external, a double of the body that manifest in the digital environment and mediates their subjective experience. Because mediating between two worlds is the fundamental role of the digital body, for it is the space in which all the possible events of the digital are actualized and then transmitted through an interface. A burning question then arises: what's the substance of the digital body? The answer is none. It is not a thing-in-itself, but rather a network, it's the point in which different trajectories encounter, in fact its structure it's fluid and ever-evolving; it is composed of all the connections that the subject makes in the digital world. The digital body has its own temporality that is the number of interactions (the prime components of the network) undertaken in a given time. These two features are at the basis

of the experience and the current understanding of the digital. The exhibition and the research will focus on these aspects, analysing them in a methodological manner using theoretical tools from philosophy and scientific findings. The exhibition will take place in 2020 and will feature a wide range of practitioners and media such as art, social media, memes and video games. It will be an attempt to create a dialogue between the research and the public by showcasing examples of digital bodies.

[1] Pierre Lévy, *Reality in the Digital Age*, 1998, Plenum Press, New York p. 39.

[2] Mel Slater, Daniel Perez-Marcos, H. Henrik Ehrsson and Maria V. Sanchez-Vives, *Towards a digital body: the virtual arm illusion*, *Frontiers Human Neuroscience*, 20 August 2008, [hFps://doi.org/10.3389/neuro.09.006.2008](https://doi.org/10.3389/neuro.09.006.2008).

[3] There were also a series of technicalities that due to the length this text is not possible to mention, but the experiment was conducted in a rigorously scientific manner to convey a fully immersive experience.

Sabina Damiani.





...COMMISSIONER
...CONSTITUTION AND
...REPRESENTING ...
...CONSTITUTION ...
...COMMISSIONER ...

LADINA DAMIAN
...COMMISSIONER

Sabina Damiani, after completing her studies in visual arts and pedagogy at the Venice Academy and in photography at the Brera Academy in Milan, has been working both as a practicing artist and a curator. The latest development of her curatorial work and interests are going in the direction of environmental art, intermedia production as well as science and art contaminations. She lives in both Croatia and Slovenia.

Hybrid Explorations: Art as a Vehicle to Understanding Environmental Issues.

by Sabina Damiani

It's been a while since we started witnessing a growing connection between art and science, and especially between art and environmental activism. In their presentation page, the Art/Sci Center at UCLA (University of California) states their mission is "To pursue, facilitate and promote research and programs that demonstrate the potential of media arts and science collaborations. The Art/Sci Center focuses on collaborative projects that address social, ethic and environmental issues related to scientific innovations". [1] Julie Reiss editor of *Art, Theory and Practice in the Anthropocene* (Vernon Press, 2018) states that "Art has an important role to play in raising our awareness of environmental issues, offering opportunities for direct action and helping us to imagine other worlds and possible futures". *The Anthropocene* is a term adopted by geologists to describe the current epoch, in which humans have been recognized as a geological force that is permanently changing the environment. More specifically in 2000, chemist Paul Crutzen

and biologist Eugene Stoermer have started to use the term that would describe the geological era that started with the Fifties, when radioactive elements from nuclear tests entered the atmosphere and dispersed around the whole planet.

“Although there is no official recognition of a rupture in the Holocene, our current geological era, this doesn’t matter that much, it does not need to be the object of scientific inquiry, in order to have an impact. The term is in use in spheres outside the sciences, and there is an array of attitudes associated with it that can be recognized in current cultural production, particularly visual art.” [2]

The topic has a big relevance today and it brings together interesting intersections. I am particularly interested in the effects of sound pollution on the marine world as this kind of pollution is not yet largely known or studied and as such is part of our collective human blindness to our current alarming environmental predicament.

In her 2014 book *This changes everything – Capitalism vs. the Climate*, Naomi Klein expresses a powerful statement “Forget everything you think you know about global warming. The really inconvenient truth is that it’s not about carbon – it’s about capitalism. The convenient truth is that we can seize this existential crisis to transform our failed economic system and build something radically better.” [3]

Today is 2019 and we simply cannot deny or minimize climate change anymore, as Klein argues it is “a civilizational wake-up call, a powerful message delivered in the language of

fires, floods, storms, and droughts". Luckily, more and more people, especially young ones, demand actions from those who are the direct cause of the environmental disaster we are all facing, big corporations that produce a massive carbon footprint and waste without taking care of it's dismantling and governments who seem to be completely inactive instead of taking bold steps.

In order to raise awareness about environmental issues, artists have an important role and ground to explore, through hybrid forms that brings together technology, scientific research and forms of artistic presentation. In this area, worth a mention is the work by Slovenian artist Robertina Šebjanič, who, among other tools, explore sound in the underwater maritime environment and she also explores the consequences of sound pollution. At her performance in 2018 in Poreč, during the aMORE festival, we have witnessed a great reception from the audience; people were impressed and shocked and certainly the performance left a mark. People are not aware that sonic pollution caused by humans has already profoundly changed the soundscape of the seas (drilling, "fracking", sonars, transportation...), to the point where natural communication between marine animals is being largely disturbed. This installation is a AV performance where she functions as a proper DJ "playing" vinyls containing a remix of underwater recordings from different parts of the world. The noise is at times, unbearable.

Another very interesting work by Robertina is the intense

AV installation “Aurelia+1HZ Proto Viva Sonification”. This project focuses on the idea of the connection between the machine, the animal and the human worlds. By working on a single organism, which is a jellyfish, she wants to point out the problematic of marine ecology. Jellyfish are extremely sensitive beings and at the same time incredibly resistant, they could live more than 500 thousand years. By creating links between man and jellyfish in this work, the artist explores the idea of prolonging life. In her multidisciplinary approach, Robertina collaborates with experts and scientists in order to create her works and her process is largely research based. Research is the core of each and every project she starts. Her works have been presented in numerous festivals and exhibitions worldwide (EYE Filmmuseum Amsterdam program Transnatural – The Age of Post Drought, Hangar Barcelona, Ars Electronica – Postcity, WRO Biennale – Wroclaw, Ecovisionaries, Instituto Mutante – Mtadero Madrid and many more).

Human activities have caused numerous bio and geochemical alterations of the atmospheric composition, the oceans, the soil, causing ecological transformations that are destructive, such as global warming, acidification of the oceans, expansions of oceanic areas and sea level rising, causing extinctions of various species due to habitat loss and generally the destruction of entire ecosystems. In addition, we have to deal with the enormous problem of plastic pollution which affects every creature on earth

and especially in the oceans; from big mammals, to the smallest creatures such as plankton. Scientists believe that phytoplankton contribute between 50 to 85 percent of the oxygen in Earth's atmosphere. Dr. Sylvia A. Earle, a National Geographic Explorer estimated that planktons provide the oxygen for one in every five breaths we take. In the framework of the festival aMORE (Croatia) in an exhibition at the Historical and Maritime Museum of Pula, Croatia, we will present Noise Aquarium, a collaborative work by artist and professor Victoria Vesna (USA) and her collaborators, Dr. Alfred Vendl and Dr. Martina Froeschl from the Academy of Applied arts in Vienna (Science Visualization Lab – Digital Arts Department), Dr. Stephan Handschuh from the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna, Dr. Thomas Schwaha from the University of Vienna, Department of Integrated Zoology, Paul Geluso for sound, and more.

“Noise aquarium” [4] deals with the problematic of underwater noise that affects all creatures and utilizes 3D-scans of planktons obtained with unique scientific imaging techniques and immerses the audience in the 3D ‘aquarium’ of diverse planktons projected as large as whales. Along with the projection, the exhibition features a sound installation made of real underwater noises and sounds, both biological and human made. Noise Aquarium spotlights animated 3D-models obtained with scientific imaging techniques of the extremely diverse plankton spectrum. For the site - specific installation in Pula, the

technology of augmented reality has been as a basis to “animate” all the images of planktons that were exhibited in the space.

Victoria Vesna’s work can be defined as experimental creative research residing between disciplines and technologies. With her installations she investigates how communication technologies affect collective behavior and perceptions of identity shift in relation to scientific innovation (PhD, CAiiA_STAR, University of Wales, 2000). Her work involves long-term collaborations with composers, nano-scientists, neuroscientists, evolutionary biologists and she brings this experience to students.

As an artist and a curator, I firmly believe in the power of raising awareness through the arts and art initiatives in terms of sharing knowledge about the endangerment of the maritime ecosystems, and the environment in general. Initiatives that involve the audience through artistic or interdisciplinary approach could be a tool that brings together science and the public through the accessibility and the capacity to reach different audiences. Art exhibitions can facilitate or hinder people’s understanding of global climate change but at the same time there is certainly a proper challenge of making the very same issue meaningful to people’s individual social realities.

- [1] <http://artsci.ucla.edu/>, consulted on 6th October, 2019.
- [2] <https://vernonpress.com/file/6615/d00119ece2e9bc6635f5288f9b5dc7f6/1537447061.pdf>, consulted on 5th May, 2019
- [3] <https://thischangeseverything.org/book/>, consulted on 6th October, 2019.
- [4] <http://noiseaquarium.com/>, consulted on 8th of May 2019.

Veronica Mazzucco.





Veronica Mazzucco is an independent curator based in Pordenone, Italy. She attended the CAMPO curatorial programme promoted by Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin and collaborated with many contemporary art institutions among which La Biennale di Venezia, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection and Dolomiti Contemporanee.

Curating/Caring. A Tool for Rethinking Dominant Models.

by Veronica Mazzucco

I would like to introduce my research, that is focusing, at the moment, on the concept of "care".

For care I mean "attention", "being interested in" ("interest" not in the sense of "profit" of course, but in its etymological sense of "being in the middle"), "being prompt", "build a relationship with".

I began to think at this concept a couple of years ago, while I was working at an exhibition in Turin, with a friend and colleague Sergey Kantsedal. We built a project that was a sort of a therapy for the institution that was hosting us, to which we wanted to raise some critics to enhance its awareness and identity.

We imagined the institution as a living being that needed human contact to live and the four artists that collaborated with us worked a lot on the actors that are usually involved in an exhibition, such as the artists themselves, curators, collectors and, most of all, the public.

It was already evident that exhibitions are made more by people than by artworks.

Then I decided that I wanted to know at which point this concept of “caring”, “taking care” could have been stressed, and pulled beyond the boundaries of the art world to become an interpretation key, a tool for a positive critic for other fields of study that are topical today (for example issues on post-capitalism, post-colonial, post-internet, gender, anthropocene and so on).

In these different contexts I discovered that the logic of care can act as a counterpoint to the logic of prevarication. The caring approach can therefore establish a proactive thinking mode, as an alternative to the widespread model based on the prevarication of one over the other.

Many authors have focused on the concept of “care”. I think for example at a book by Adriana Cavarero, which is entitled *Inclinazioni: critica della rettitudine* (Inclinations: a critique of rectitude, ie), that analyzes the posture, the geometry of the body, reviewing artistic, literary and philosophical works that highlight how the inclined posture, which is that of the care by the way, is typical of the female, while the straight one is that of the male, and it is the dominant one. And in this frame the word “queer” express another meaningful geometry too, because it’s the twisted (from the latin work *torquere*).

Or, there is another text by Bernard Stiegler, entitled *Taking care of youth and generation*.

Stigler speaks a lot about “a care for intelligence and an

intelligence of care”.

He points the attention on the “systematic stupidity” in which we are falling because we’re unlearning how to do things and, worst of all, we’re forgetting how to live. Think about how the digital natives are using emoji instead of their face to express their emotions.

The kids’ attention is grasped by the stream of the socials and the web where you can find content mixed with advertising, in a continuous stimulus that doesn’t admit satisfaction (hyperattention).

So intelligence is a cure and must be cultivated through education, as a form of responsibility.

Intellectuals must contribute to cultural debate publicly, like for example Pier Paolo Pasolini did in the ’70 writing on newspapers about social economic and political issues.

Intellectuals must confront with the public.

Curators and artists can embrace this role, and contribute to the cause. This is one of a thousand ways in which they can take care. We must support the idea that art is not detached from the world, but it’s a powerful means of communication. We can support the idea that art is not a luxury good, and try to address to that 99% - as they say - of the people and try to create the conditions for more a responsible, respectful and democratic approach.

Nataša Radojević / Western Balkans Visibility and Diversities in
a Global Context. Memory. Trends. Future.



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re mixed with
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Jakub Gawkowski / Where We All Ride Bamboo Bicycles.





Giulia Civardi / Late to the Party. On Urgency.





Lucrezia Calabrò Visconti / Attentiveness How to Strike in the Economy of Presence.





Nataša Radojević is the founder of Logic Art Space (Florence) and the curator of Drina Gallery (Belgrade). As an art historian, curator, consultant and producer, she collaborates with local and international artists, galleries, institutions, private and public collections. She lives between Belgrade, Florence and Rome.

Jakub Gawkowski is an art writer and curator. His last projects include group exhibitions "Skip the line! Populism and contemporary promise" and "The Most Beautiful Catastrophe". Graduate student at the history department of the Central European University, he lives and works between Warsaw and Budapest.

Giulia Civardi is an Italian independent curator and writer based in London and Paris. In 2016, she founded the non-profit research-driven platform Grey Cube 113. Her recent projects and exhibitions include "Grey Cube 113" at Tate Modern in London (2017), and "The insider outside" at Rupert at Centre for Art and Education in Vilnius (2018). She holds a master's degree in art theory from Goldsmiths University and a BA in culture, criticism and curation from Central Saint Martins. Her latest research deals primarily with archival practices in visual arts and questions of performance and performativity.

Lucrezia Calabrò Visconti is an independent curator and researcher based in Turin, Italy, where she runs the Young Curators Residency Programme of the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo. Recent projects include “Abracadabra”, 6th International Biennale for Young Art (Moscow), “Why Is Everybody Being So Nice?”, De Appel and Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam) and CLOG (Turin). In 2017 she co-founded “The School of the End of Time” with Ambra Pittoni and Paul-Flavien Enriquez-Sarano. She completed her education at De Appel (Amsterdam), CAMPO (Turin) and IUAV (Venice).

Chiara Ianeselli.





Chiara Ianeselli is an Italian curator and a PhD candidate at IMT Lucca, Italy. Her research focuses on the use of titles in modern and contemporary art and specifically on the "untitled". She worked for Artissima, dOCUMENTA (13), 55th Venice Biennale, 14th Istanbul Biennial among others. Since 2014 she has been coordinating the project "Les Gares", fostering research in anatomy theatres.

When a Drop Falls: Carlo Benvenuto's Immanence.

by Chiara Ianeselli

British physicist Arthur Mason Worthington (1852-1916) has carried out experiments since 1875 investigating the splash of a drop of fluid. His perception of the event – and the subsequent annotations he carefully made, preserved in the Royal Society Archives – indicated regularity in the effects of the splash: tiny drops would form in a symmetrical way: “for Worthington himself, the subject had always been, as he endlessly repeated, a physical system marked by the beauty of its perfect symmetry”. [1]

As Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison pointed out, scientists have often set out to capture the world in its types and regularities, not peculiarities, in order to more clearly fulfill the perfect description of the world. [2]

This simplification of the world through a pictorial taxonomy functioned as an explanation of the micro and macro scale phenomena of the world and beyond: science emerged. For almost twenty years, according to Worthington's system, there was no option for anything else but order, balance, symmetry. Why was all the time spent in observing a splash? The answer to this question is provided by Mr. Worthington

himself:

The splash of a drop is a transaction which is accomplished in the twinkling of an eye, and it may seem to some that a man who proposes to discourse on the matter for an hour or ten must have lost all sense of proportion. If that opinion exists, I hope this evening to be able to remove it, and to convince you that we have to deal with an exquisitely regulated phenomenon, and one which very happily illustrates some of the fundamental properties of fluids. [3]

What is considered is what happens within a matter of milliseconds – a few thousandths of a second apart. A thousands of times he had let splash mercury or milk droplets, some into liquid, others onto hard surfaces to carefully record what was happening. This time seems no relevant but it becomes if we consider that a large fraction of the gamma rays is emitted in the first few microseconds (millionths of a second) of the atomic explosion.

It was only in 1894 that Worthington was eventually able to photograph, as a pioneer of high-speed photography, the instant of a splash of water into a fluid, milk. The result suddenly contradicted decades of careful observation: an explosion of chaos and entropy. Symmetry shattered and his idealized mirages collapsed. The vision he has had until that point was heavily besieged: "Thus the mind of the observer is filled with an ideal splash – an Auto-Splash – whose perfection may never be actually realized." [4]

He also noted that: "It is impossible to put together the drawings so as to tell a consecutive story, without being guided by some theory" [5], basically declaring that he was seeing only what he wanted to see.

The research of Carlo Benvenuto shows several connections with Worthington's ways of proceeding. The choice of photography has been for Benvenuto as ineluctable as the impending photograph of 1894 for Worthington: "it can in a fraction of a second produce an image. The one printed on the film will be definitive and irrevocable". [6] Analogic photograph indeed denies possibilities, affirming one and only one possible reality. Thus, what is revealed in Benvenuto's work is exactly the opposite of the discoveries of Worthington: the ultimate perfection, balance, harmony and symmetry inhabit his world. Photographs are used to describe what is not visible at first sight: a suspended architectural metaphysics where shadows and chaos have rarely been seen, a magic realism. But there are not tricks or postproduction work: cuts, positions, lights are decided at the moment of the shoot. His subjects, when captured by the camera, become perfection, a not easily visible purity, indeed "painting and drawing are like seeing with the eyes, while photography is seeing with the mind". [7]

Worthington's obsession, "the splash of a drop which is accomplished in the twinkling of an eye" might seem, as the same physician describes, something infinitesimal and irrelevant to everybody else: the same applies to Benvenuto, whose entire corpus and interest well rest in his intimate house

in Stresa. Indeed all his subjects belong and consist of the house close to the Maggiore Lake, the house of all the objects portrayed.

Particularly inspiring regarding the capacity of photography of rendering reality are the words of Paul Valery regarding the relationship between word and image, literature and photography. No matter how excellent is a writer, how could he describe, for example, a face in such a way that it would not suggest as many visions as the number of readers? [8] Photographs, and Valery thinks for example about the images of the passport, identify unequivocally the features of a person, in such a precise way that words could never reach. How does the work of Carlo Benvenuto relate to this? The table, a constant architecture (subject) of his photographs, changes dramatically in each image, and it is able to take different shapes in the mind of the observer becoming an intimate element, a different table for every observer. In a magical manner, although incredibly characterized, the table loses its connotations to become every table that has ever existed, a transcendent element, every table that would ever exist, almost The table. This way, the powers of photography of unmistakably identify, fall short. Benvenuto indeed is not reproducing reality, rather including it in his work, avoiding, by always keeping the scale 1:1, any form of optical, human, distortion: "The estrangement is produced regularly when you become aware of something, it is produced whenever you add an element to your awareness of the world, you must inevitably update your thinking and deal with the new

intruder". [9]

Some similarities do seem to exist with the work of David Hammons, for which Dawoud Bey has noted that he "is committed to creating works of art that exist in their own right; in their own time and space. Some of us may never see them. In fact, most of us won't. Yet the sense of myth created by the unseen is one of Hammons's concerns". [10]

The time of the photographs is indistinguishable, but it seems the same, day by day, photograph after photograph, as well as the age of the subjects, whose future coincides with their past, photographs which also do not seem to be exposed to the process of ageing. What would an archaeologist do in 1000 years, trying to reproduce the house in Stresa, where Benvenuto has been taking those picture? Will an anthological exhibition be able to reveal the interiors of the house, as well as the atmosphere that governs it?

What about the non material realities, as Valery reminds us: "Photography accustomed the eyes to wait for what they must see, and therefore to see it; and instructed them not to see what does not exist". [11]

While photography seems to bring close to us the object, taming its extraneity, including it in an ideal taxonomy of the photographed, in Benvenuto's work, objects become untouchable. The work of Benvenuto requires an immanent space: a human that, as necessary for Worthington's observations, can sit still for long in front of them, in order not to see.

[1] Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity*, New York, Zone Books 2007, p. 11.

[2] *ibidem*.

[3] Arthur Worthington, *The Splash of a Drop*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1895, p. 1.

[4] *ivi*, p. 58.

[5] *ivi*, p. 75.

[6] Carlo Benvenuto, "La fotografia è uno specchio che riflette sempre la stessa immagine [...] essa permette in una frazione di secondo di produrre un'immagine. Quella impressa sulla pellicola sarà definitiva e irrevocabile" in Carlo Benvenuto, *Fermo Immagine, Arte, Vita e Mercato della Fotografia*, edited by Spenuso and Mezzocut-mis, Mimesis 2012, p. 54.

[7] Carlo Benvenuto in a private conversation with the author, 10 of January 2019.

[8] Paul Valery, *Discorso sulla fotografia*, edited by Raffaele Lucariell, Filema Edizioni, 2005.

[9] Carlo Benvenuto, in *Le cose del mondo*, interview by Massimiliano Gioni, published on 16 February 2018 at http://www.trax.it/carlo_benvenuto.htm, translation by the author ("Lo straniamento si produce regolarmente quando si prende coscienza di qualche cosa, si produce ogni qualvolta si aggiunge un elemento alla propria consapevolezza del mondo, inevitabilmente bisogna aggiornare il proprio pensiero e fare i conti con il nuovo intruso").

[10] D. Bey, *David Hammons: Purely an Artist*, Uptown, 1982, p.16.

[11] Paul Valery, *Discorso*, cit., orig: "La photographie

accoutuma les yeux à attendre ce qu'ils doivent voir, et donc à le voir; et elle les instruisit à ne pas voir ce qui n'existe pas", p. 20.

Matteo Binci.





Matteo Binci is an Italian researcher and art curator. His research is focused on the relationship between aesthetics and politics, with particular attention to the topics of archives and social movements.

Social Movements and Poor Images.

by Matteo Binci

I would like to discuss the concept of relevance and the importance of the multiple and different points of view from which we can grasp the importance of an event.

There is an anecdote about a well-known Italian politician, from the 70s, who used to close himself in the office and said "I don't want to be disturbed". One day, despite the ban, his secretary barges in the office saying: "I'm so sorry, but it is an absolutely important new". His answer was cold and cutting: "important for whom?"

In the era of semicapitalism [1], what is called "art world" is often, but fortunately not always, a world intoxicated by an economic hegemony in the hands of a few privileged subjects. It is very clear to know what is relevant within this production cycle: biennials, private galleries, investors, collectors and museums create a cultural monopoly with specific linguistic codes nowadays based on collective hysteria of a perfectionism considered necessary, but many times end in itself. Regardless its usefulness, this cultural monopoly frighten because of the

univocal linguistic code that has imposed and because of the ferocity with which implemented it. Just think of temporary cultural events that upset entire cities, through the use of the town plan in order to achieve an high impact in the art world, with no real benefits, except for the increase in prices, and the worsening of inhabitants life conditions. It is the so-called dictatorship of aesthetics.

Inside this soft dictatorship, what is effervescent to me is that thought that is discarded from time to time, because it is considered irrelevant, minority. A thought that persists, even within those minority theories that are becoming relevant, in more recent times. Examples are postcolonial, decolonial, feminist and queer theories. Everything is progressively defined, framed and subsumed within the valorization process and becomes thus a topic of great interest, as well as to exploit. It is a cyclical dynamic that is not only negative because it continually leaves in its path corpses, insignificant subjects, people without money or abandoned space. In fact, the definition of any phenomenon cuts out all the other possible phenomenon that however begins to move away, or to press and erode the constituted phenomenon.

For example, the myth of Drexciya speaks about an underwater world inhabited by the bodies of children never born of African women thrown overboard from ships that facilitated the slave trade during the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. [2]

The drexcians are the excluded, the derelicts, warriors who struggle in the seabed for justice and to bring the African American people back to their homeland: Africa. In these abysses, life in the metropolis flows carefree, while the warriors stir and give life to an effervescent rise of bubbles that upset the oceans from below, from the underground. The myth of Drexcia was employed by the Detroit music scene in the 1990s. In the previous decade, inspired by technological rebels and Alvin Toffler's book *The Third Wave*, Derrick May, Juan Atkins and Kevin Saunderson gave life to the production known as Detroit techno. However in the nineties techno became popular, record companies increased, parties and the cultural industry began to market its products. In the underground environment it was decided to resist against the white exploitation of the rich with a black resistance of young people who linked activism and music together. Drexcia was part of this underwater resistance, an aquatic invasion ready to re-emerge and having a militant attitude towards techno. In the world of Drexcia, the social and political structures of the nation-state were exceeded and the miscegenation of the inhabitants of the Black Atlantic was privileged.

The problem now is: how don't fall into the easy institutionalization of marginality?

In this environment, art can be a way of suspending the need of a sense of belonging, and a possibility for new forms of relationship with the territory, the community and the social sphere. Starting with the fact that sensitivity is particularly

affected by the acceleration of the mental work rate, the stress of attention, and also by competition and depression artists have begun to reconstruct the conditions for social solidarity. That is not an ethical value, nor a political program, but it is an empathic aesthetic pleasure of the presence of the Other (human being or not).

If we think of the concept of “social movement”, there are many imaginaries: the clash and the violence, the tiredness of a thought that appears antiquated and the inefficiency of the ways of acting. All these relevant imaginaries are predominant, and must be abandoned.

So, now, we have to think what is irrelevant and minority opinion in a movement.

Those, who work with political art, operate in the real to modify it or to embrace it: it is necessary to think about a third way that, through the idea of treatment, allows to realize politically committed artistic practices, in a process of “negotiation” with the real.

Marina Garcés [3] uses the concept of “to be affected” to open a third way to an art that, as a political practice, must be affected by reality. This brings to a sort of re-politicization process of visual cultures, an attempt to do it through the treatment of political matters, and through the expansion of the geography of art or the construction of new social territories. However, this does not guarantee the qualitative transformation of knowledge, but only a quantitative

transformation, that generates new forms of banality. Art is intended as a space for self-understanding and self-legitimization where there is no real opening. As Garces says, art is not acting honestly with real. Honesty with real is the power of material action. It is the power of implication and involvement that generates a practice of desires, understood as urgency and necessity: desire for the truth and for the common. It is a question of reconstructing the way of doing cultural research forged by modernism that was splitted in two ways: how to think about reality? (representation). How to transform the real? (direct intervention). This rhetoric must be dismantled through the treatment: How to implicate ourselves in reality as cultural practitioners, that means create a reflective artistic intervention that modifies and affects me emotionally. For this reason, it is not a matter of having a cosmo-theoretic vision, or of seeing the world "from outside". But it is necessary to put into practice forms of situated knowledge. The situated knowledge is a form of knowledge that makes you at the same time witness and responsible for your own visions and representations. To situate oneself means to become reflexively vulnerable to oneself. That is to say, to see with the other and not in place of others. Honest practice is positioned in the grey area between struggle and suffering. Let's see how this happened within movements such as Occupy, Indignados, Arab springs, new feminist movements, and environmental movements such as the No Tav Movement. These movements have developed, alongside forms of struggle and direct confrontation, systems of knowledge and

visual cultures rethinking. They have been movements that have developed politically committed artistic practices, in “negotiation” with the real, in which individuals constantly try to rethink themselves and the world they inhabit.

In this rethinking perspective we should take into account the images. Most of the images in which the movements are represented from the outside are highly aestheticized images with a strong visual impact. This process of spectacularization risks unifying the plurality of forms of expression in a few reference images. Furthermore, we fall into the error of considering the community as a harmonious unit rather than as a process full of antagonisms and differences. The movements involve various degrees of aesthetic and political quality, but frequently there is a tendency to idealize images by capturing their harmony, unity and heroism. Images and imaginaries should not instead hegemonize movements, but create processes of connection between the multiple participating groups because collective liberation also passes through the proliferation and liberation of aesthetics.

On the contrary, in the attempts of self-representation of the movements we see low quality images, deteriorated by the enormous flows that the data perform before being made accessible online or offline. These are the images that the artist and theorist Hito Steyerl defined “poor images”:

“The poor image thus constructs anonymous global networks

just as it creates a shared history. It builds alliances as it travels, provokes translation or mistranslation, and creates new publics and debates. By losing its visual substance it recovers some of its political punch and creates a new aura around it. This aura is no longer based on the permanence of the 'original', but on the transience of the copy [...] The circulation of poor images thus creates 'visual bonds', as Dziga Vertov once called them. This 'visual bond' was, according to Vertov, supposed to link the workers of the world with each other [...] In addition to a lot of confusion and stupefaction, it also possibly creates disruptive movements of thought and affect. The circulation of poor images thus initiates another chapter in the historical genealogy of nonconformist information circuits". [4]

In conclusion, I think that we should follow the flow of poor images of social movements, to criticize and act in the construction of relevance. And we can do this only developing emotional ties and artistic interventions that make us vulnerable to ourselves, in the need for implication in material actions.

[1] <http://www.scapegoatjournal.org/docs/09/Irmgaard%20EMMELHAINZ,%20On%20Eros,%20Communication,%20Desire%20and%20Semio-Capitalism%20An%20Interview%20with%20Franco%20Berardi.pdf>.


[2] <http://shimajournal.org/issues/v10n2/h.-Gaskins-Shima-v10n2.pdf>.

[3] <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.3402/jac.v4i0.18820>.

[4] <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/>.

Giulia Iacolutti.



A person is seated at a dark wooden conference table. A black gooseneck microphone is positioned in front of them. To the left of the microphone is a clear plastic water bottle. To the right is a clear glass containing a beverage. In the foreground, a white name tag with blue text is placed on the table. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

Suzana Milevska

Giulia Iacolutti is an independent visual artist and photographer working mainly on personal projects in Latin America and Italy. She has a bachelor and master's degree in Economy of Art by Ca' Foscari University, Venice. Through different tools and languages, she explores social and political issues that are strongly related to the notion of identity. Her first book 'Casa Azul' about five transexual women in a Mexican jail, was published by the(M) editions and studiofaganel in June 2019.

Horror Reality. The Relevance of an Artistic-Political Sublimation.

by Giulia Iacolutti

Good afternoon everybody.

Thank you for your time.

It is a pleasure to be here with you all.

My name is Giulia Iacolutti, I'm a photographer and visual artist from Udine, and today I am here to speak about "'Horror reality': the relevance of an artistic-political sublimation", with reference to my investigation.

In the 1930s, Walter Benjamin started his reflection about art from the idea that art itself is a much more complex reality than the simple object it investigates; art, according to him, is linked to its historical reality. In other words, artistic works are not only mere testimonies of their creators but they are also artistic facts with real possibilities of progress for the masses.

During the 4 years during which I lived in Mexico, from 2014 to 2018, for the vast majority of my time I researched two themes: the use of images of violence on one hand; the identity construction of minorities on the other hand. These two themes have strongly influenced my own thematic

research and my own creative process so far.

Currently in Mexico, there is an extensive use of images of violence in the media as well as in museums: the photographs are often literal, bloody and explicit. What I would like to do today is to reflect about the negative psychological impact that these pictures have, how they affect not only the families of those affected in the first place, but also society on the whole, ultimately considering that by showing more violence further violence can be fostered or even normalized. Max Horkheimer, for instance, in his 'On the critique of instrumental reason', points out that the confusion between means and ends is the key problem of modern rationality. This approach is pertinent when assessing the usefulness of images of violence, since these images are actually means, and the discussion about their existence – their usefulness or their possible censorship – responds precisely to the interests of the involved parties in its display or concealment. The importance of images in general, and of that of violence in particular, lies in the fact that, as David Freedberg points out, all these images have real power: images impact in fact on the mood, on the emotions and on the attitudes of the viewers ... hence their use in the propaganda, in adverts, in journalistic or artistic fields. Images influence the attitudes and actions of citizens, filtered by the media, and this technical manipulation causes a spectacularization of reality which, in turn, generates a complication to distinguish what is real from what is not, the fantasy, the fiction. In the field of images of violence, Michela

Marzano calls this phenomenon the 'horror reality'. According to her, "horror reality" is a reality that cannot be assimilated to the right to know, because it does not generate reflections, indeed it paralyzes one's ability to think and one's capacity to be critical. A possible consequence then is the strengthening of indifference because, as Susan Sontag wrote, "One can feel obliged to look at photographs that record great cruelties and crimes (...) Not all reactions to these pictures are under the supervision of reason and conscience. Most depictions of tormented, mutilated bodies do arouse a prurient interest".

As Didi-Huberman argues referring to Auschwitz's horrors, images can become testimonies of the unimaginable. That is why I feel it is relevant to find a way not only to explore reality through photography, but also to investigate the visible in order to offer a critical stance towards invisible or unclear structures. It is my point of view that we must consider a form that deepens reality and that generates an informed reflection on a given context; thus an image, which, by proposing content, tries to captivate the public through aesthetics. It's possible to make it organizing different materials linked together by the same narrative synchrony, and explaining a complex phenomenon, creating a system of representation (this associates photography with art) and also registration (and that links it to journalism).

The element always required is the time to investigate: either from direct immersion, thus by having the artist working as

a chronicler or an anthropologist; or through post-curatorial reconfiguration, thus having a curator assembling images and texts in a second stage. In fact, the materiality of the photography, like the method of print, also becomes an integral part of the transmitted message, because the responsibility of the viewer is induced not only by means of the visual, but also by the tangible.

The artistic expression, when connected with the socio-political reality, becomes an instrument of communication and of denunciation: it becomes a critical exercise to stimulate the conscience of the individuals. If it is clear that art moves the political consciousness of citizens, the pivotal question is if art can also generate political action.

If the spectator's classic outrage is normally a denial of the work intimately linked to its rejection in terms of disregarding the language of the piece, I think it is relevant to consciously organize the aesthetic experience to modulate in the viewer the resurrection of a social trauma and an individual indignation towards the content and not towards the form.

I think it is vital for the artist to be able to stimulate the public by proposing new poetic ways to look at reality, ways to counteract the dominant enchantment of our culture, which tends to flatten everything. What I am saying is that through the artistic work citizens should feel the desire/need to become activists without violence.

Much needed are thus debates where to collectively re-define the artistic and intellectual reactions to the ordinary tensions, an artistic and political sublimation of the rhetoric of horror.

Andrea Hummer.





Andrea Hummer is General Manager of Festival der Regionen,
Austria.

The Deviancy of Relevancy.

by Andrea Hummer

Relevance could only be discussed in the context of the consideration of what one wants to achieve. Relevance itself only says, that a goal which one has, has been achieved or approached. I know that I do not tell any news when I emphasize that the first step is to define what we want to achieve, how and with whom and the second step is to consider if we were successful - if it was relevant what we did.

The Festival der Regionen (Festival of the Regions) is one of the most distinguished festivals of contemporary art and culture in Austria. It has been taking place every two years since 1993 in locations outside of the urban centres and cultural hubs in Upper Austria.

It was founded to support and strengthen artists and cultural initiatives in the region.

Upper Austria has 12.000 square kilometres (approximately as big as the Italian region Trentino - Alto Adige) and 1,5 million inhabitants. The fact that the festival is always in other places of Upper Austria is an important factor in relation to relevancy. We always have to start from zero, continuity is not possible. The first step when we chose the region for the next festival

is building up a network with artists, cultural and social initiatives, activists and politicians. Together with them we try to find out, what their burning questions and their needs are – these discussions form the basis for the next topic of the Festival der Regionen. The background foil for the selection of the topic is to find possibilities to make the world a better place – less egoistic, less combative, more just, more liveable.

The next step is an open call for projects addressed to local, regional, national and international artists and initiatives. The open call, the selection of the projects and the festival itself follow some criteria and principles which are important for us:

- Promotion of and support for local contemporary artists and initiatives

- Involvement of free/activist media

- Gender balance

- Fair Pay

- Inclusion

- a. offers for and inclusion of people with special needs: deaf people (e.g. translation into sign language), wheelchair users,

...

- b. Pay as you can (an attempt to eliminate the barriers for socially disadvantaged individuals)

- Involvement of new audiences

- Participation and Empowerment (with them, not only for them)

- Green Event (taking care of the environment)

I would like to take a closer look on participation because I find it very crucial when we talk about relevance. But: Using the term participation we have to be very precise what we are talking about, because the term is used for completely different concepts.

We define participation as a process where artists create conditions for codetermination, where they pay attention to the empowerment of the participants. The involved people should not be instrumentalised for the art project – they should be motivated by the artists to bring in their competences, their visions, their wishes, their questions. It is a very difficult task for the artists to keep the balance between the quality of the process and the quality of the outcome. In an ideal form it could be a learning process for both: the artists and the participants.

All these considerations have the same origin: the wish to generate relevance. The question we permanently have to ask ourselves is if we are successful, if it is relevant what we are doing. How do we approach these questions, how could we measure success or failure? It is still quite common to measure relevance by counting visitors or participants. It is a very usual trap not only for politicians and administration but also for the people working in the field of arts and culture.

We could count all the workshops, the participants, the visitors – which are quite impressive numbers. But we think that this does not tell enough about relevance. We have to question ourselves: Did our activities change anything which will last longer than a short moment? Did we succeed in initiating

processes which will go on when we leave? Did we strengthen the contemporary artist and initiatives in the region? Was the topic of the festival important for the region? Did we implement new approaches and networks?

To find out the answers to these questions we collect stories of what we and the artists observed and what participants and visitors expressed. We also evaluate if our criteria and principles were implemented and fulfilled. We do this to learn from our failures and from our success, to implement our findings at the next festival.

But: There is neither a guarantee nor a recipe for relevancy. It is something you cannot plan in the way you plan the organisation of a festival. This is the reason why I talk about the deviancy of relevancy. But the first step to a success is the vision, the will to change something and the wish to be relevant.

Trieste Contemporanea's Staff in Venice.
from left: Dea Slavica, Marina Lutmann, Costanza Grassi,
Simona Di Marco.





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EFFERVESCIBLE. SEEKING ONGOING RELEVANCY– Central and Eastern European art curators and experts of contemporary art gathered to discuss the topic of the 9th CEI Venice Forum in two intensive meetings in VENICE (on 9 May 2019 at the Academy of Fine Arts, in connection with the preview days of the Biennale Arte–58th International Art Exhibition) and in TRIESTE (on 25–26 October 2019 at the CEI Secretariat premises). The book includes their contributions and those provided by specially invited young European art curators.