

IL CORPO DEL REATO: LA RECLUSIONE / THE BODY OF EVIDENCE: IMPRISONMENT

King's (Daniele Innamorato/Federica Perazzoli), Mark Raidpere, Stefano Scheda, Valter Luca Signorile, Artur Zmijewski

11 November 2007 – 27 January 2008

Vernissage: Saturday 10 November 2007 at 5.30 p.m.

Fri-Sat-Sun 2.00-6.00 p.m. (or by appointment)

The Centro remains closed 24, 25, 26, 31 December 2007 and the 1st of January 2008

Following the publication entitled *La Famiglia. The Leaving Room* for the publisher Neos.e, which heterogeneously tackled the themes of the body, technologies and the identity of the exhibition space in parallel with the evolution of artistic languages, the CACT is now presenting *IL CORPO DEL REATO: LA RECLUSIONE / THE BODY OF EVIDENCE: IMPRISONMENT*, the first stage of a cycle of thematic exhibitions that the Centre intends to build on in the course of 2008, accompanying them with critical essays.

The body has always been one of the important topics about mankind, tackled in the last forty years by artistic production that has set out to identify its significance in the post-industrial age of consumption and technology. To what extent has the aestheticisation brought about and imposed by communications media, by means of the camera, modified the idea of identity and sense of gender we achieve by means of the body? Causing phenomena such as aggressiveness and/or self-mortification? Do the ideas described by Lea Vergine and formalised with the term *Body Art* still apply? The idea, that is, of escaping the body by means of a subjective, analytical and somewhat regressive return to our roots to reconstruct the ego through performance and ritualistic, almost tribally inspired acts?

In his work *The Game of Tag* (1999), Artur Zmijewski (Poland, 1966) – Polish pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005 and *Documenta 12, Kassel 2007* – tackles the concept of history and of historical awareness: a video shot in two rooms, one of which is an old gas chamber from the Nazi period. The work develops around an ironic parallel between the pattern, or game, of naked bodies as a symbolic and psychotherapeutic return (the game) to traumas and their objectivisation, and the crude reality of the place (a naked body and a gas chamber). The Polish artist invites the observer to think consciously about the mortification of the flesh and of imprisoned human dignity, as well as about the turmoil suffered by the spirit. Yet the combination between the systematic extermination of human lives and the concept of a game as an analytical decomposition and recomposition comes across as even more bitter.

The video trilogy *Jerusalem #1, #2, #3* (2007) by Valter Luca Signorile (Italy, 1965) tackles the theme of the "body as language" and of the ritualism of imprisoned man vis-à-vis the universe of the liberated spirit. Made anti-aesthetically, using a mobile telephone, these works are three actions without an audience, in which the author-actor stages himself acting out repetitive physical gestures symbolic of invocation, of imprecation and, fundamentally, of psychological dependence. Signorile conceives of the place where his videos are shot as a transphysical room and his gestures are equally metaphysical and solitary: the fists with which he belabours his

own breast or the hands he raises towards the heavens. His personal surrender to ruination is all there in the repetition of his invocatory gesture, in obsessive repetitiveness, as though he were cloning and encompassing all the world's tragedies: an almost hypnotic crescendo to break out of a condition of imprisonment, a sort of antidote to the awareness of Death, a probable divine injustice and the concept of human responsibility.

Similarly, *Extreme Oath* (2007) is a video shoot of the lower part of the body, the feet, as they bathe in a basin containing a reddish liquid reminiscent of blood as an element of life and of passion. The feet enter into this symbolic uterus and are gradually coated in the liquid, as though the aim were to reverse or re-live the experience of birth from a mother.

The sublimation of the involuntary pathology when faced with ulterior perfection constitutes the set of topics tackled Artur Zmijewski (Poland, 1966) in his documentary video work *The Singing Lesson 1* (2001). A choir of young deaf-mute men and women is rehearsing – under the guidance of a conductor and an organist – the *Kyrie* from the Polish Mass written in 1944 by the composer Jan Maklakiewicz. The evident impossibility of performing the canto, because of the choristers' incapacity, together with the different parameters for expressing the spirit by means of the body, convinces the observer to undertake a comparative, more conscious analysis of the acceptance of Diversity. The author's predisposition to the sublime and his poetic approach make this video almost a metaphysics of Otherness.

10 Men (2003) is the film being shown by Mark Raidpere (Estonia, 1975) – Estonian pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005 – whose content – as in all his works – is social and contextual in character. On a completely antiseptic photographic set, the artist from Tallinn “interviews” ten inmates in the prison in Tartu (Estonia), portraying them head and shoulders, one after another in a sequence, in different poses, but all in silence. The only sound comes from an instrumental track in the background, otherwise there is nothing but the male portrait. They are all serving long-term sentences, shut away from social life for a long time, deprived of any normal professional and individual dignity, imprisoned in a place that leaves them no other possibility of identifying with the society around them. Only the technological medium of the video, the dematerialisation caused by Raidpere's camera and his hand, gives them back their freedom to pose, to show themselves, to laugh or to boast, triggering an altered, corrupt mechanism of interpretation of reality in the observer.

This analysis of the falsification generated by technology as a “tampered mirror” is also picked up on in the recent film works of the artist Stefano Sceda (Italy, 1957). The scenario for *Fuoridentro #2* (2006) is the presence of a wall built in the foreground out of cages containing songbirds, behind which men and women are coming out of the sea and heading naked towards this metal barrier, towards us, the audience. They look at us from the other side of the fence that blends metaphorically with the wall in the exhibition space, almost as though they were imprisoned behind and beyond the projection, trying to break through that threshold between physical and abstract, between real and imaginary.

The video *Cartoline* (2004) reiterates the concept of mirror, as a surface that reflects not so much our image, as the representation of ourselves.

The artistic duo of King's (Daniele Innamorato/Federica Perazzoli) (Italy, 1969 and 1966) has come up with an unprecedented installation entitled *Music Non Stop* (2007): music as an instrument or as a visual pretext. The work comprises walls covered entirely with drawings on transparencies, a neon sign placed on the wall

and a video projected on a screen placed on the floor. Featuring well-defined linguistic militancy, it takes a fresh look at the world of rock and pop stars since the seventies, applying visual and corporal means of expression, dressing up and making up, to give body to a stark declaration of political, social and sexual identity malaises, by means of forms of extreme self-abuse and transgression.

Mario Casanova_2007
[Translation: Pete Kercher]