

## INTIMACY AND DESECRATION

Mirko Aretini, Pier Giorgio De Pinto, Mark Raidpere, Veronica Tanzi, Artur Zmijewski

Vernissage\_Saturday 28 November 2009 at 5.30 p.m.

28 November 2009 14 February 2010

(closed from 24 December 2009 to 8 January 2010)

Fri-Sat-Sun\_2.00-6.00 p.m. (or by appointment)

The CACT Centre of Contemporary Art in Canton Ticino is hosting an exhibition entitled **Intimacy and Desecration**, a further stone that the institution based in Bellinzona now adds to its programme of investigations into the body and the dynamics of gender and identity in general. This exhibition takes the form of an analysis poised between pragmatism and vision, rationality and emotion, in which such artists as De Pinto, Raidpere and Zmijewski develop on their themes from an historical and analytical vantage point.

The five large digital prints on canvas by **Pier Giorgio De Pinto (Italy-Switzerland\_1968)** from the series entitled **Sacer (Dionysus' darkroom)** (2005) constitute the prologue to the exhibition, in which the artist revives the mythological character of Dionysus. A dual personality who was both sacred and sacrilegious, the Greek god now bursts onto the scene of contemporary history and culture more than ever as an agent of destabilisation and desecration, capable of driving mankind towards a renovation of its inner archetypes and moral models. Dionysus and Bacchus are both metastases of one and the same pagan figure, a bearer of upheaval and of a loss of all reason induced by overindulgence with wine: the element that is capable of undermining the rationale that we usually trace to masculinity, casting it into the melting pot of passions and sentimentalism traditionally connected to femininity. Dionysus is the unisexual, ambiguous element in every man's own tale: the rich and enriching diversity and pure otherness that is expressed in the concept of man's nomadism, osmosis and cultural promiscuity within the confines of his various different experiences. A figure that symbolically traces the union between male and female, dissoluteness and extravagant superiority, but that already represents the fears harboured by a prissy society.

**Artur Zmijewski (Poland\_1966)** confronts us with recent history, the Second World War, using his 2004 video work **80064** to tell the dramatic tale of a man, an ex-concentration camp internee and Auschwitz survivor, who reacts to today's opulent bourgeois society by having the tattoo of his prisoner identity number on his arm, which had worn and faded with time, renewed as a way of reminding us that history and stories always repeat themselves and could also be repeated again. His severe tale, a sort

of cold documentary film, is a touching warning that speaks to the inner depths of the man whose body and soul have been maltreated and to collective and individual social responsibilities. As usual, Zmijewski has the knack of being lucidly embarrassing as he confronts the observer with situations created by man himself, but that the passage of time all too often tends gradually to abstract to a dull form of immunity.

**Andrey/Andris** (2006) is the video that **Mark Raidpere (Estonia\_1975)** is showing in a large format in a room at the CACT. It is a film interview that the author conducts with an eighteen year old youth, Andrey. The approach is sometimes that of a documentary, as Raidpere once again shows us how fact relates to fiction, not only with the unusual attention he pays to the technological medium he uses, but also in his choice of interviewee. The artist creates no particular stylistic idioms, but uses the video camera for what it is: a tool to work with and regain reality. A veritable interface with the world around him, this work is the story told by the randomly chosen actor about his aspirations as a young man who has just broken out of adolescence.

The works presented by the young artist **Mirko Aretini (Italy-Switzerland\_1984)** and by **Veronica Tanzi (Switzerland\_1975)** feature a distinctly more intimate approach. A video artist, film maker, writer and scriptwriter, Aretini immediately adopts an absolutely post-technological and transmedia approach to tackling the image. As he belongs to a techno-television generation, the artist points out that “being what we look at“ has now become the mechanism of reaction of a contemporary observer who is often inhibited in his freedom of action and his ability to exercise a critical appraisal about everything that confronts him. **A quiet moment** (2009) is a film work whose narrative does not unfold through a clear and unambiguous script and sinopia, but through audio-visual rhythms. Static and exasperating, nihilist and disarming as it feeds impressions and emotions back to the audience, the image is accompanied by a soundtrack constructed equivocally on the basis of a reiterated passage of two fundamental harmonic degrees that pass back and forth.

While Veronica Tanzi usually tackles basic topics related in particular to the feminine community, in the case of this exhibition, where she is showing the contextual installation **My room** (2009), she elaborates on these concepts from a more intimate vantage point. By recreating what the artist considers to be a private space of her own, she uses vigorous linguistic modes through technical diversification. A bed, some drawings, projections on the wall and on a screen, a variety of symbolic objects. Pervaded by a mute force (the installation is absolutely silent), Tanzi sets out to involve the public, provoking its intimate reactions as it interacts with the symbolism of an intrinsic, complex intimate world.

Mario Casanova\_2009 [translation Pete Kercher]

