

IL FRAMMENTO COME STRUMENTO
Per un'archeologia dell'effimero

FRAGMENTS AS A TOOL
Towards an archaeology of the ephemeral

Maria Thereza Alves - Øystein Aasan
and
Piero Gilardi
Curated by Lorenzo Bruni

6 July – 28 October

From 6.30 p.m., on 6 July 2017, the Galleria Astuni will be presenting a show curated by Lorenzo Bruni titled “**IL FRAMMENTO COME STRUMENTO. Per un'archeologia dell'effimero**” with the internationally known artists Maria Thereza Alves, Øystein Aasan, and the special participation of Piero Gilardi, an artist active in the sphere of Arte Povera and an anticipator of Relational and Interactive Art.

The group show “**IL FRAMMENTO COME STRUMENTO. Per un'archeologia dell'effimero**”, curated by Lorenzo Bruni, is characterised by large-scale “environmental installations” by **Maria Thereza Alves** (São Paulo, 1961; she lives and works in Berlin) and **Øystein Aasan** (Norway, 1977; he lives and works in Berlin). Both inquire into the idea of monuments and their new possible function by proposing a dialogical and contextual environment. In one part of the gallery rises a structure/volume by the Brazilian artist that makes us think about the tension between the idea of culture, that of nature, and colonialism. The artist establishes this narrative by bringing together archival documents, handwritten notes, and illustrations of the plants considered to be “typical” of the Guangzhou area, which she studied on the occasion of the 2008 Triennial. On the other side of the exhibition room is placed, instead, the structure/platform conceived of by the artist from Northern Europe; he is someone who inquires into the health of the modernist heredity, and the connections between architecture, rites, and the concept of the sublime. Aasan manages this by developing a dialogue/friction between paintings and sculptures, found images and objects that have been created or recreated.

The works on show have in common the wish to adopt remains and fragments in order to arrive at a totality through which they aim to question themselves, from an anomalous viewpoint, about the possible role of art objects today. The associations that these artists establish with their images/documents evoke a wider narrative through which they make the observers reflect, not so much on the identity of a civilisation from the past, but on the one of which they are a part. Such a “potential” kind of narration, one that is activated live and in which the presence of the observers is fundamental, is not the point of arrival but, rather, of the departure of a cognitive process and not just a formal expression. In this way the artists can stimulate interesting discussions both about which knowledge, of a Western kind, it is possible to hand on now in a period of digital archives, and about the search for a new relationship between the observed object and the observer in the “expanded present” of the social media. Their aim is to establish an open dialogue dealing with contemporaneity, with the specific culture through which people interpret reality and, above all, about the search for a new kind of morality when looking at things/information.

The special participation of Piero Gilardi (Turin, 1942; he lives and works in Turin) allows the show to supply further stimuli about the themes dealt with, also thanks to the 2001 interactive sculpture titled “*Scoglio Bretone*”, as well as other interventions by him that derive from his wish to characterise exhibition spaces in a “transcendental” manner. These latter works further underline the need to shift the argument being dealt with away from the point of view of reporting to one that is extremely ontological. Gilardi has always worked on the transformation of cultural references in contrast to those of nature, an approach that has allowed him to create an “other” communication with respect to that promoted by the mass media. This approach has led him to think in a direct way about the question of what it means to be active and/or activists in a computerised society, a theme that today really needs further inquiries.

Lorenzo Bruni, the curator of the “IL FRAMMENTO COME STRUMENTO. Per un’archeologia dell’effimero” project, has used these words about the choice of these artists: “*Maria Thereza Alves, Øystein Aasan and Piero Gilardi, the artists I have involved in this show and in a large part of the book, are those who have adopted the concept of finds in an introspective way rather than any other. All three do not do so in order to legitimise any specific culture but, rather, they use the concept as a tool for collective and democratic discussion in order to reason about which identity can be constructed and shared by our current society.*”

Furthermore, Bruni has described his area of inquiry in the following way: “*The choice of dealing with a theme of this type started from an awareness that the younger generation, from various parts of the world, is increasingly beginning to work with an imaginative archaeological approach and to show the particular process rather than results in themselves. This is the generation that has grafted itself onto those who had earlier dealt with thoughts about collective memory and about geometrical abstraction in a period of digital screens.*”

The author has also said, “*The real novelty now is that there are being investigated and utilised objects that are not a part of modernity, but are resistant to the passage of time, are perceptible as archaic and, above all, as being placeable in an a-historical dimension. It is, in particular, curious that this need is particularly felt even by established artists who based their early art researches on a dialogue/friction with the globalised mass media and with a dematerialised economic system: in other words, with the present communications system. This at least is what has emerged from the recent works by Jeff Koons who in 2012 felt the need to exhibit in a museum of sacred art in Frankfurt and to make a modern version of the ‘Willendorf Venus’. This same tension has led Damien Hirst to base his recent show at Punta della Dogana in Venice on a documentary video of the alleged discovery in the sea of the very fragments he showed in the exhibition rooms, thus making them resemble an ethnographic museum. Other artists, including Gabriel Orozco and Roberto Cuoghi, have over recent years worked on the idea of finds as a report and vice versa. The examples I have just given are, of course, only the tip of the iceberg of a more complex reflection that still has to be fully manifested.*”

The reasoning just expounded started from a very simple question, one that this show proposes: “*What question links together the various current art researches? Some ten years ago the most innovative works were equated with the question: what transforms an everyday object into a work of art? The answers have allowed us to undertake a radical and fully comprehensive reasoning about the state of post-colonialism, the new role of museums, that of the viewers, and the relationship between the private and public dimensions in a ‘liquid society’. Instead today, in the post-internet world, that of ‘personalised terrorism’ on a global/local scale, of populist politics and the leading role of fake news, the question seems to be: what makes information more ‘true’ with respect to all that which we have free access to?*”

The curator finally underlines that “*the intention of the Galleria Astuni seems to be to highlight the need to regain direct enjoyment of fragments of reality, both of the present and of the past. For this the artists involved in the project aim at creating stories that are the equivalent of ‘possible’ narratives that must be interpreted and discussed collectively. Only in this way, their particularly evocative collages seem to suggest, the subjects (artists/viewers) can investigate the identity of the society to which they belong and that they help nourish with its daily gestures. As a result, the book and the show were not considered to be interchangeable in their content and results, but strongly interconnected in order to better discuss the relationships that can be established today between culture, nature, politics, history, and the enjoyment of works of art*”.

MARIA THEREZA ALVES

Born 1961, São Paulo, Brazil / Lives and works in Berlin

Maria Thereza Alves researches social and cultural phenomena working particularly with situations which question social circumstances about what we think we know and who we think we are and instead looks at where and how we actually are at this time. Recently Alves has participated in the 13th Sharjah Biennale, 32nd São Paulo Biennale and will be participating in the upcoming Frestas Triennial in São Paulo. She has had a solo exhibit at MUAC in Mexico City and a survey exhibit at CAAC in Seville. She participated in DOCUMENTA (13) with an installation, "The Return of a Lake". Alves is the recipient of the Vera List Prize for Art and Politics 2016-2018.

ØYSTEIN AASAN

Born 1977, Kristiansand, Norway / Lives and works in Berlin

Øystein Aasan received his education from the National Collage of Art and Design, Oslo.

His practice uses architecture, collage, sculpture and painting to address memory, the function of images and the place of the viewer. He has exhibited nationally and internationally, including at the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo; The National Museum of Art, Oslo; Lautom, Oslo; Stenersen Museum, Oslo; Sørlandets Art Museum, Kristiansand; PSM, Berlin; Liverpool Biennale; Momentum Biennale, Moss, Norway; Migros Museum, Zürich; Kunstverein Arnsberg, Arnsberg, Germany; and La Vitrine, Paris. He has published texts and essays in several international magazines.

PIERO GILARDI

Born 1942, Turin, Italy / Lives and work in Turin

In the recent past he has produced a number of multi-medial interactive installations and participated intensively in international shows in the sector, e.g. the ARTEC Biennial of Nagoya; ARTIFICES 3, Paris; MULTIMEDIALE 4, Karlsruhe. In 1993 he set up a "virtual" hall at the 45th Biennial in Venice. He presides over the international association "Ars Technica" which has promoted two Arslab exhibitions of neo-technological art in Turin. Among the latest solo and group show "Nature forever", MAXXI, Rome; "La Macchina Estrattiva", PAV Parco Arte Vivente, Turin; "L'inarchiviabile", FM Centro per l'arte contemporanea, Milano; "Art turning left", Tate Liverpool; His work is part of important public institutions among which Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Giorgio Morandi Foundation, Bologna; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Ludwig Foundation, Wien.