

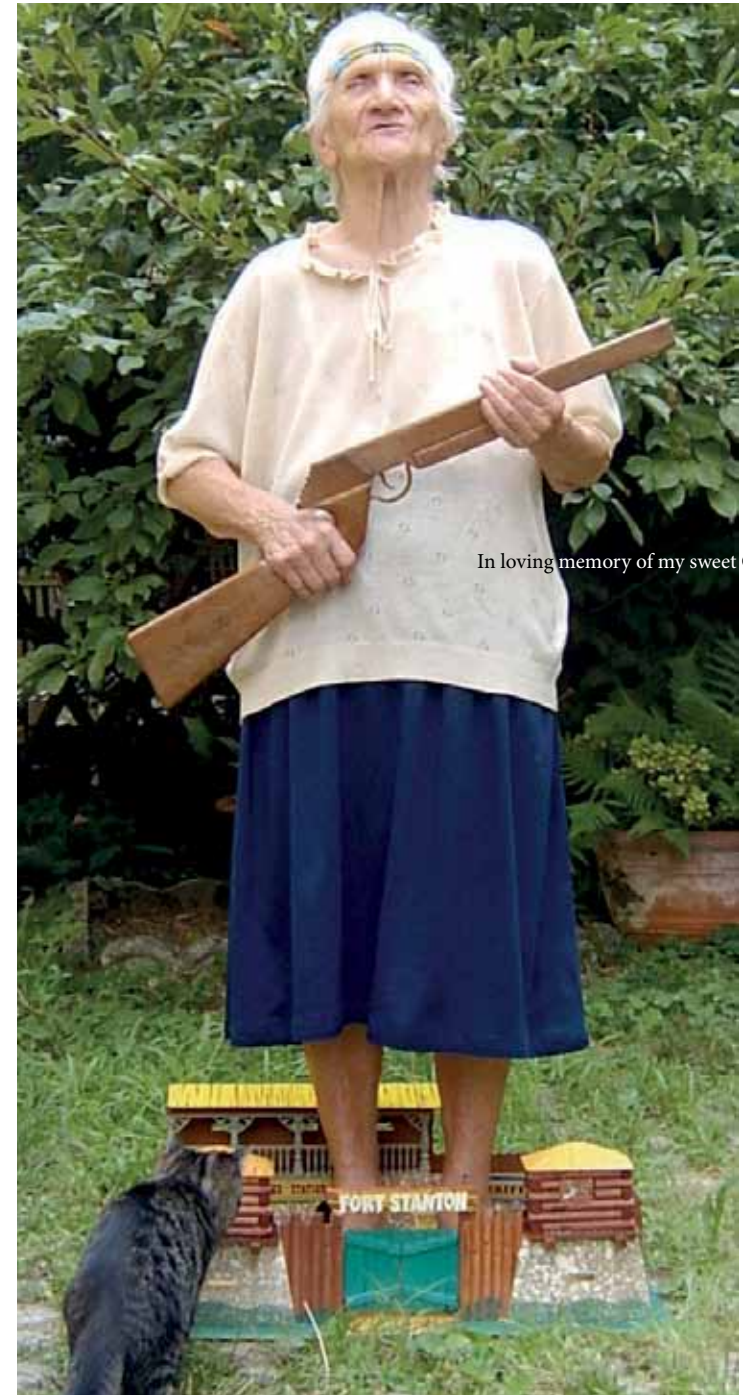


Andrea Contin **AS A CLOWN**

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FACTORY-ART gallery
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Cover: *L'entrée des gladiateurs*, 2004, video still
Next Page: *Fort Stanton*, 2005, digital photo



In loving memory of my sweet Granny

The “skin” of Andrea Contin

The many expressive forms that current visual culture offers us are insufficient truly to ‘enter’ the artistic development of Andrea Contin. Not even the possible analogies and comparison with many other international artists operating in what we may define as being empathetically close to Andrea Contin’s *modus operandi* are sufficient.

And it would be reductive to describe one work rather than another, because Andrea Contin chooses the most varied of means (drawing, photography, installation, video, performance) only and exclusively for one motive: to form an experience that finds its maximum presentation in an artistic operation that is constantly changing.

Andrea Contin has a (material and cultural) ability to reflect that is not that of an artist but of an aesthetician who shapes matter in the light of an involving and synaesthetic possibility worthy of a scholar rather than of an artist. The first mediator between the abstract thought and its phenomenality is often the artist’s body itself, which bends and transforms itself in name of the medium. Between the conceptual and the ‘worldly’ skin (to use a term dear to aesthetics) resides the intention of the operator; it is transfigured by a constant irony used as primitive language. An irony seen as a rhetorical figure able to maintain a distance from its own operations, and then review them in the light of a renewed awareness.

Andrea Contin asks the user not only to be present but also participant in this process, which can become a drawing, an object, a photograph, a performative action or video. And this same spectator, who has in the meantime become an active agent, discerns the cultural intent, aware of sharing a total involvement with the artist in a sort of bond that is constantly developing.

The works of Andrea Contin have the privilege of not being easily categorisable and usable in many meanings: the task of placing them in one setting rather than another lies solely with he who intends sharing the provocative intent underlying the cultural desire of the artist.

It is not possible to speak of one work rather than another, especially for Andrea Contin. We live in a visual age in which we cannot forget the complexity of our way of life and way of thinking: the artist can do nothing more than aim higher still, perhaps muddling the expressive game amidst a thousand dichotomies and relations, just as occurs in our communal lives.

Fabiola Naldi

Impressioni di una stufa
davanti a un bambino

(Impressions of a stove
standing before a child), 1999



Is Andrea Contin an irreverent (but not excessively so) proponent of a possible gastronomic critique of opulent identity? Perhaps. In any case *Impressioni di una stufa davanti a un bambino* (Impressions of a stove standing before a child) in some sense denounces a kind of domestic life, which appears to leave no room for other opportunities or desires. Two contrasting images have been superimposed to create the work: on one hand the feeling of endless gentleness and warmth generated by Medardo Rosso's *Impressioni di un bambino davanti a una stufa* (Impressions of a child standing before a stove), on the other the taste-distaste, use and consumption of domestic objects accompanied by an energy flow, the same kind the belly of a stove seems to give off.

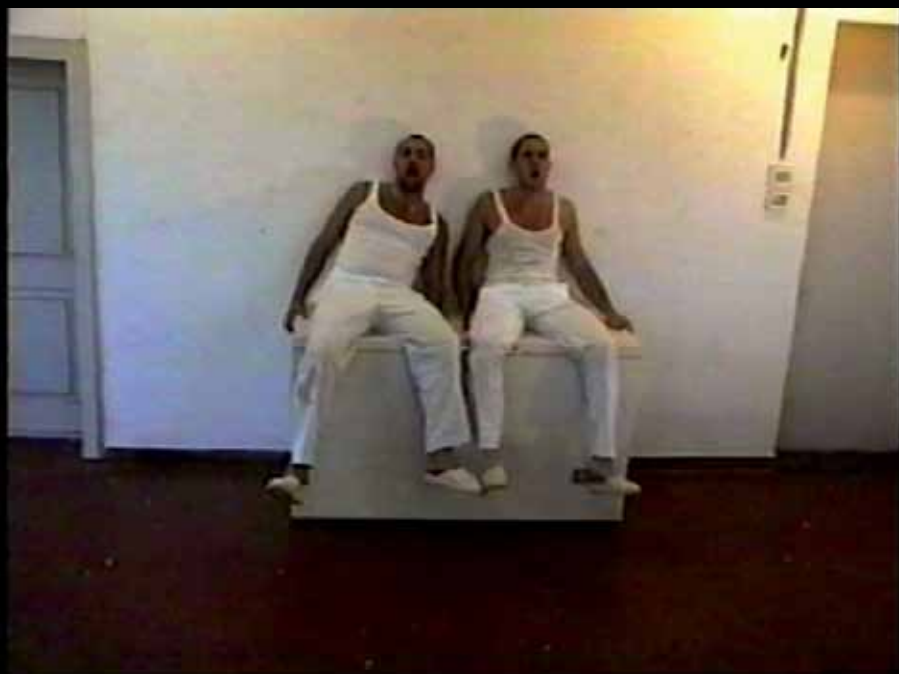
Enrico Gusella



stove, monitor, video, life-size



FREEZER, 1999



video: color, sound, 4'28"
installation: freezer, internal speaker, monitor



(...) Here is how the issue of transforming a very ordinary object into a hyper object is handled: assuming that a hyper-object is an object encompassing and containing the intentions, desires and fantasies of a consumer (of goods or art, it makes no difference), Contin resolves the matter by actually encompassing and containing himself in the object, he actually enters inside it.

That is exactly what happens in *Freezer*, as the freezer in question gathers exceptional potential thanks to the video clip and soundtrack: it turns into a horrendous instrument of torture ready to be upturned, in comic fashion, into a grotesque gag.

Guido Bartorelli

Can a big white cold freezer rebel against the fact it only serves to hold frozen food and change into something else thanks to the artist's work? It would seem so, considering that Andrea Contin has turned it into an appalling prison for a talking body.

A change has taken place and something is still battling in the darkness and light: a voice inhabits that space, a man is asking to get out, you can hear him breathing. The freezer is no longer a fridge because it has trapped a body inside its ice-coloured cavity, a man, an image. A battle has begun in which no blood is spilt, indeed it is "funny", between the warm body of the artist and cold body of the freezer. One body against another, a battle characterised by gasping breath and pulled muscles. (...)

Maura Pozzati

S'i' fosse foco, arderei 'l mondo;	If I were fire, I'd burn up the world;
s'i' fosse vento, lo tempesterei;	If I were wind, I'd pester it;
s'i' fosse acqua, i' l'anegherei;	If I were water, I'd sink it;
s'i' fosse Dio, mandereil'en profondo;	If I were God, I'd plunge it;
 s'i' fosse papa, sare' allor giocondo, che tutti cristiani imbrigherei;	 If I were the Pope, I'd be gay, 'cause I'd torment all the Christians;
s'i' fosse 'mperator, sa' che farei? A tutti mozzerei lo capo a tondo.	To serve as emperor I might agree so I could chop off everybody's head.
 S'i' fosse morte, andarei da mio padre;	 If I were death, I'd go to my father;
s'i' fosse vita, fuggirei da lui: similmente farei da mi' madre.	If I were life, I'd flee him: I'd do the same with my mother.
 S'i' fosse Cecco, com'i' sono e fui, torrei le donne giovani e leggiadre:	 If I were Cecco, as I am and was, I'd take the lovely and the lively dames
e vecchie e laide lasserei altrui.	the crippled and old I'd leave to others.

Cecco Angiolieri

(...) These verses poke fun at the most powerful people in the world, in these mediaeval times. The tone is always over-the-top, aimed directly at the reader with a knowing wink. For Contin this is pure fun. I have heard him blasting the high and mighty and make fun of elaborate aesthetic experimentation into cyber bodies and the post-human, trying to get the general public more closely involved in his works. (...)

Stefania Michelato

mattresses, internal speakers, string, life-size

S'I' FOSSE FOCO (If I were fire), 2000



ALBERGO DIURNO

(Daytime Hotel), 2000

Is shit comic or tragic? I realise that I have written about the subject of solid excrement several times, but I was not really aware of it until Andrea Contin asked me to scribble down a few lines for this occasion. I am slightly embarrassed to say that I have discovered that shit is indeed one of my leitmotifs. Shit and writing are very closely related issues for me. Don't think that I get some kind of enjoyment out of calling this substance by its most direct name: "shit". Moreover, I do not really think this word and this subject in general have any real provocative value in literature. (At last. The writers and artists of our age are very lucky. At last lots of things have used up their provocative force, so we can really start studying their true nature.) A few years ago some literary critics wrote that some of my writer friends and I had been over influenced by the film "Pulp Fiction". That may well be. I was not struck by the violent scenes but, I swear, I was really taken by the scene showing John Travolta going to the bog to read. And whenever he does, outside sheer pandemonium breaks out. Robberies, ambushes. Reading sitting on the toilet seat costs him his life. Travolta carelessly leaves his weapons outside the toilets, Bruce Willis finds them, picks them up, waits until he comes out of the bathroom and kills him. When I saw the film I thought: this cool young Californian director is firing on the Red Cross, it is too easy for a film to take the piss out of literature in this way. First of all, the film shows that literature is shitty. The laxative function of books. Secondly, it shows that literature does not teach you anything about the world, on the contrary, while some guy is busy sitting on the bog reading, all hell is breaking loose outside, including his own death. But then I thought about it and decided that perhaps that was wrong, perhaps literature actually comes out of this film quite well, because it is the only thing that manages to cause trouble to a professional killer, literature is the only thing capable of causing the death of a cold-blooded murderer. Literature and shit are indissolubly linked. Why? It is not very nice to find out that you produce crap, so you are better off thinking about something else. Reading makes you think about other things (reading is thinking under dictation). Reading while you defecate spiritualises the defecator, it disincarnates him just enough to stand the thought of the horrible stuff coming out of his body. It is perfect give-and-take: reading fills your body with spirit right when your body is getting rid of it worse contents, rancid stinking matter. By getting rid of the shit you leave room for the alphabet.

Perhaps literature actually helps you push? Does the alphabetic assist abdominal contractions? Is literature pushy or sphincterial? Is the spirit the colon's refuse collector?

Thinking about your own excreting while taking a shit is a spiritual exercise not everybody is willing to take on. It has something to do with a certain kind of philosophical heroism, it is a stoic act. I think that is why (and I am not being ironic) when August Rodin had to imagine a person thinking, he depicted them sitting down in the posture of somebody ejecting faeces: including the tension in the face muscles, the contracting of the jaw, the fist pressed against the forehead. Is the man pondering over some unsolvable puzzle or is he just trying to deal with rock-hard constipation?

I think it was Seneca who wrote "inter foeces et urinas nascimur" (or perhaps it was one of the Fathers of the Church?). We are born amidst faeces and urine. The excrement a mother releases during birth welcomes the newborn baby into the world (to tell the truth, midwives actually catch all the shit coming out of the woman giving birth and mercilessly drown it in sanitised water basins, like unwanted kittens. In any case, shits are in some sense our twins). In a story by Ruben Fonseca it says that a body decomposes starting from the bacteria in its shit. But I still have not given an answer. Is shit comic or tragic? Like everything else, shit is both comic and tragic. This is the most disappointing answer I could have given, but it is also the most sensible. (A question like "is it comic or tragic?" can take you off on a digression around the world. For the time being I am just suggesting a trip around the body: are feet comic or tragic? And hands? And ears? And the bellybutton?).



No, it is too easy to get away with just saying "it depends..."

Shit is tragic.

The way shit is represented is comic.

Tiziano Scarpa



Cooperativa

L'ASTROLABIO

TRASPORTI - TRASLOCHI



I FACCHINI SONO SEMPRE INNAMORATI
(Movers are always in love), 2001

Contini's project foresees a performance on the day of the opening of the exhibition, to be documented on video tape, as well as an installation of pieces of furniture and a photograph of the group of collaborators with whom he'll have worked in this occasion. The title of the work, *Movers are always in love*, is intentionally ironic, and only in part illuminates the poetics of this artist who's committed to working with constantly different but always irreverent languages, markedly ludic and often disturbing. Here he's referring to the compliments which workers direct to pretty girls as they make their way through the streets. Andrea will arrive when the event is already underway, in order to find the room with an already numerous audience, and will then park the truck of the moving firm, a co-op, with which he's working. Along with other movers, he'll unload a certain number of pieces of furniture that will become a part of an installation. The walls of the hall will already display a photograph of the group of workers with the truck behind them. A video camera will film the whole scene from above, while also projecting the images onto a monitor visible to the public. The ironic character of this project conceals a number of highly acute and symbolic reflections on the role of contemporary art. Andrea Contini's installations and performances are usually based on the concrete and evocative power that objects hold as constant presences within our lives. All of us are surrounded by and make daily use of an enormous number of things, which also, to some degree, come to represent us. In this sense, the act of moving inserts itself into a pre-established order, and then sets itself to expunging it, or to bringing about its total and drastic alteration. The manual labor of movers thus enters into contact with persons and their lives, the spaces in which they have lived, the objects which belong to those spaces, and their arrival symbolically represents a moment of closure with the past. Such an experience leads to an understanding of the strength of the roles that are played by the objects with which we live our daily lives, and the intention of Contini's performance, chaotic and ludic, is to transmit precisely this sense of having to do with something in a state of transformation, and with something that with time will settle down into a state of accumulation, and static sedimentation. His reflections on manual labor are of equal importance, and as we see it enter into contact with more profound themes, it takes on the nature of a creative language that's endowed with the ability to construct new worlds and new visions.

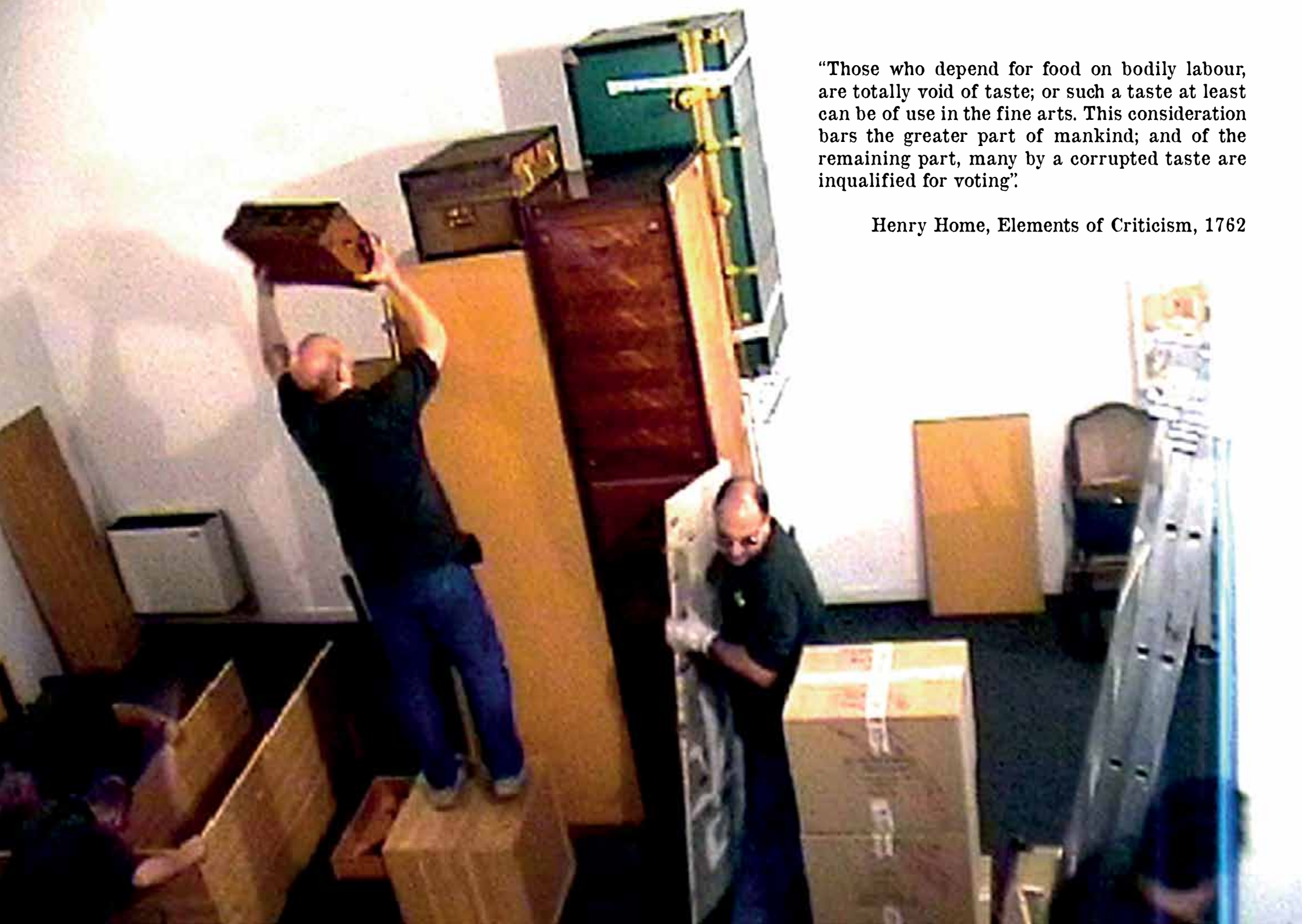
Elisa Mezzetti



photograph, performance, environment, video

"Those who depend for food on bodily labour, are totally void of taste; or such a taste at least can be of use in the fine arts. This consideration bars the greater part of mankind; and of the remaining part, many by a corrupted taste are inqualified for voting".

Henry Home, Elements of Criticism, 1762



[I'm sorry to die (but I'm happy)], 2001



MI DISPIACE DI MORIRE (MA SON CONTENTO)



(...) Something comparable happens in *Mi dispiace di morire (ma son contento)* (I'm sorry to die [but I'm happy]), in which a cast of his bust emerging from the wall is hung by the neck from a washing machine during the spin cycle. An homage to Ettore Petrolini (in the title), by also to the Klein of *Le saut dans le vide*, this parody of suicide evokes in a symbolic way not so much the chronicles of accidents in the home, as the negative tensions hidden between the domestic walls, a metaphor for the tension that accumulate inside us. But can a suicide be ironic? And, above all, isn't the staging of one's suicide something that goes beyond the individual sphere?

Raffaele Gavarro



bathtub, lcd monitor, speaker, life-size



U.R.U. (who are you), 2002

The Caterpillar and Alice looked at each other for some time in silence: at last the Caterpillar took the hookah out of its mouth, and addressed her in a languid, sleepy voice.

Who are YOU? said the Caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, I--I hardly know, sir, just at present--at least I know who I WAS when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.

Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

In the Disney version of the story, the caterpillar writes three letters U.R.U. (Who are you?) in spirals of smoke, it does not even bother to speak. From our viewpoint the question is disconcerting: is a caterpillar dressed up like a caliph smoking hookah and living behind my mirror actually asking me who I am?

In Andrea Contin's work a bathtub acts as a door and boundary, like Alice's looking glass. A loud metallic noise, which seems to be coming from the pipes, sends out the message in Morse code: U.R.U.

A different subterranean and secret world opens up through the plughole, of which we can only see an eye, which rolls as it gazes around itself, intrigued by how strange we are, so different compared to its own normality.

Luca Beatrice





performance
video: color, sound
production stills: c-print



VERSUS
2002-03

“The promoters and managers are the farmers and we are the cattle”. This excerpt from “The Journey Man”,* Michael Murray’s recent autobiography, once a promising heavyweight, will inevitably fuel the polemics which for years now have been encouraging a general aversion to the world of boxing.

The days when boxing was called the “noble art”, as depicted in the writings of Jack London and Ernest Hemingway, now seem light years away, while the enthusiasm of Norman Mailer and the ripples Muhammad Ali generated on a social level can only be looked back on nostalgically. It is now widely believed that boxing is nothing but a way out of the ghetto for street fighters. Gambling and a number of unscrupulous promoters have deprived it of any credibility it still had and, sadly, after coming under the scrutiny of the TV media, just like every other sport, to assess its potential as a spectacle, boxing has emerged battered and bruised suffering a terrible defeat.

Don King, the famous promoter of the Ali/Forman match at Kinshasa in 1974 and now considered to be the real boss of boxing, would never admit it but, due to his troubled public life, his former pupil Mike Tyson would certainly attract a bigger TV audience for a 15 second brawl in a bar with some random bystander than a world title fight between the reigning champion Lennox Lewis and Evander Holyfield. A barbaric, cruel and outdated sport, assuming we can still call it a sport: proposals to abolish boxing have come from all over the place, and the publication of Michael Murray’s book merely seems to confirm this. And yet in this highly revealing book, Murray has something very pointed to say about the whole issue of abolishing the sport: “they want to ban boxing, but what do they know about us? What do they know about boxing? Are not we well aware of the physical pain we have to go through? The idea of abolishing something you know nothing about is the most ridiculous thing that anybody could say”. What appears to be a contradiction in terms, actually underlines the crux of the matter: lots of punches, not much money, but boxing is still as fascinating as ever. Man-to-man combat, discovering one’s own limits, suffering to the limit to achieve the best possible result and, most likely, the total absence of any technological frills – which means the sport is still the same today as it was a hundred years ago, - the ring itself, the lights and two men trying to overcome each other using only their hands.

It is a dual, the oldest form of confrontation to settle an argument in its purist form. And then there is the training, the most complete sports preparation of all (lots of running for the legs, plenty of work to strengthen the arms and quick reflexes together with a careful strategy: a boxer must study his opponent to learn his secrets, tactics evolve during the bout, and you need to be clearheaded and very much in the moment right to the very end).

Boxing’s intriguing charm has even managed to capture the attention of contemporary art. Starting with the famous poster by Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat from the 1980s (recently revived by Tim Noble & Sue Webster) and then through Steve McQueen, Mark Wallinger and most recently Carlos Amorales and Cameron Jamie, artists have frequently borrowed the rules and dimensions of the ring, the dynamics of fighting, analysing and dismantling both its stylistic and conceptual aspects. What Andrea Contin has done is apparently not that different from what is considered an ordinary boxing match. There is a ring, audience, the backing of the local boxing committee and all the folklore usually surrounding these events. But as often happens with Contin’s work, a subtle shift turns a seemingly ordinary situation into something completely different. The balance provided by the usual transferring of a sporting situation inside the walls of a gallery is disturbed by the fact that there are three boxers. It is impossible to envisage what the outcome of the fight will be. The presence of a third contender may turn out to be a bonus in terms of entertainment or a sacrilege, if not both. So “Versus” takes an ironic look at the need to pervert the structure of things in the name of superficial voyeurism. It is hard to imagine how the general public will react to “Versus”, to yet another foray into and relative transfiguration of the real world in an artistic setting. It is hard to envisage how boxing will come out of this. As far as I am concerned, I will carry on staying up until four o’clock in the morning to watch the boxing from Atlantic City or Las Vegas, even though you never know whether you are getting up at such an ungodly hour to watch a fight that might only last seven seconds.

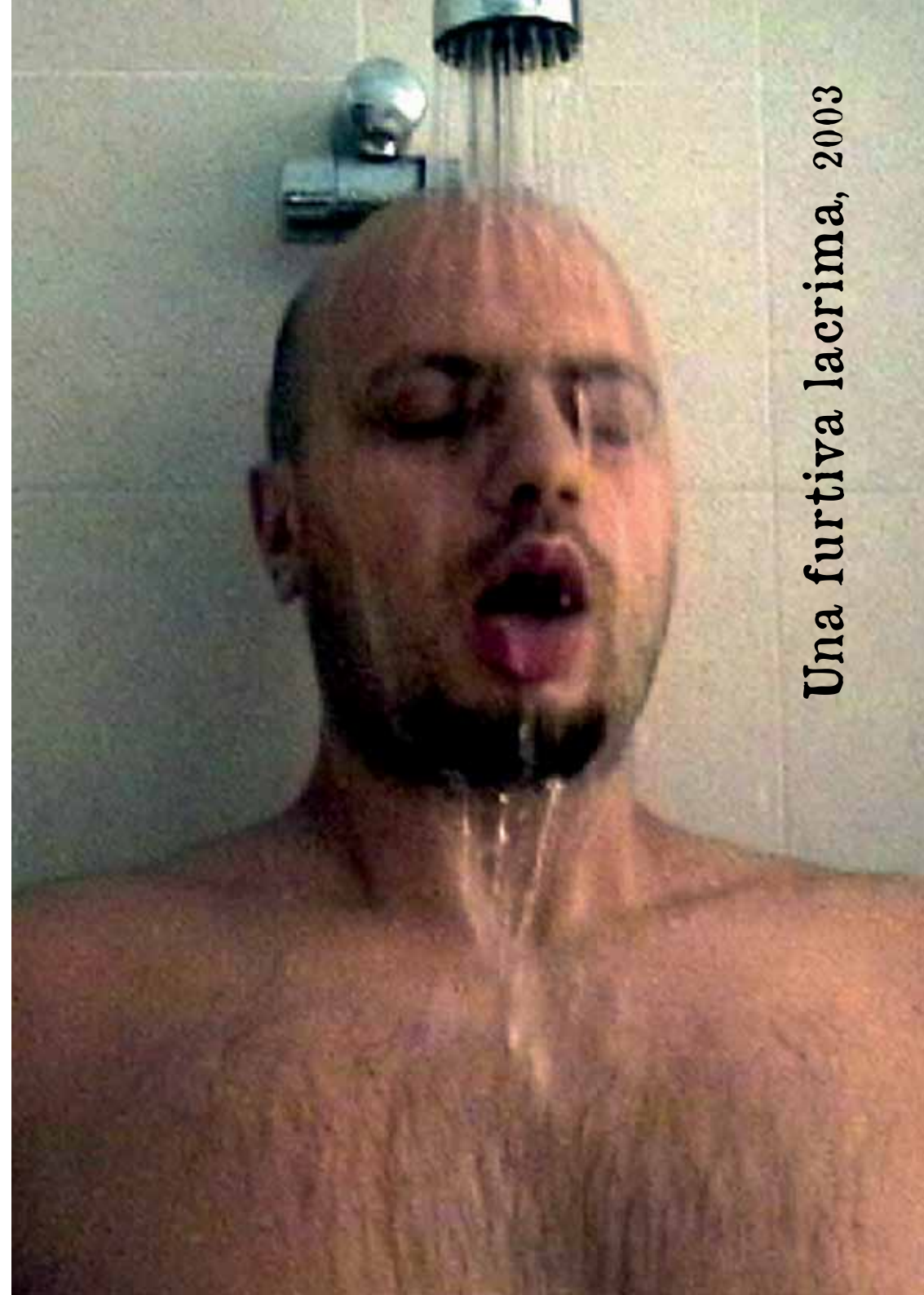
Michele Robecchi

*In boxing jargon “Journey Men” are those boxers who are hired to make a real contender look good as they get ready for a real fight.

Una furtiva lagrima
negli occhi suoi spuntò:
Quelle festose giovani
invidiar sembrò.
Che più cercando io vo?
Che più cercando io vo?
M'ama! Sì, m'ama, lo vedo. Lo vedo.
Un solo istante i palpiti
del suo bel cor sentir!
I miei sospir, confondere
per poco a' suoi sospir!
I palpiti, i palpiti sentir,
confondere i miei coi suoi sospir...
Cielo! Si può morir!
Di più non chiedo, non chiedo.
Ah, cielo! Si può! Si, può morir!
Di più non chiedo, non chiedo.
Si può morir! Si può morir d'amor.

(A furtive tear)
One furtive secret tear
from her eyes did spring:
as if those youths who can be playful
she seemed to be envious of.
What more searching do I want?
What more searching do I want?
She loves me! Yes, she loves me, I see it. I see it.
Just for an instant the beats
of her beautiful heart if I could feel!
My sighs if they were mingled
for a while with her sighs!
The beats, the beats of her heart if I could feel,
to fuse my sighs with hers...
Heavens! Yes, I could die!
I ask for nothing more, nothing.
Oh, heavens! Yes, I could, I could die!
I ask for nothing more, nothing.
Yes, I could die! Yes, I could die of love.

video: color, sound, 4'58'
Una furtiva lacrima, romanza from
L'elisir d'amore by Gaetano Donizetti, 1832
performed by Luciano Pavarotti



Una furtiva lacrima, 2003

A fish out of water

I am going to die, I am going to die even though I won't really realise it. But I am going to die.

Drip. Trickle.

I open up.

I am going to die, I am sure of it. With my eyes closed.

I try to speak. But nobody can hear me.

I am going to die and you will know about it, you will.

But I won't, and even if I do indeed think about it, there is nothing else left for me to do. Water is leaking everywhere.

I do not know where to go.

Why?

Because I am here.

Because you could read through my hole.

You could have.

But you were not paying attention. Too bad!

Drips drops gutters.

Overflows.

Floods – fills up.

No, it doesn't poison me.

No, it does not harm me, I don't think.....it is just water.

It is better to let yourself go, splash down, open up – swallow.

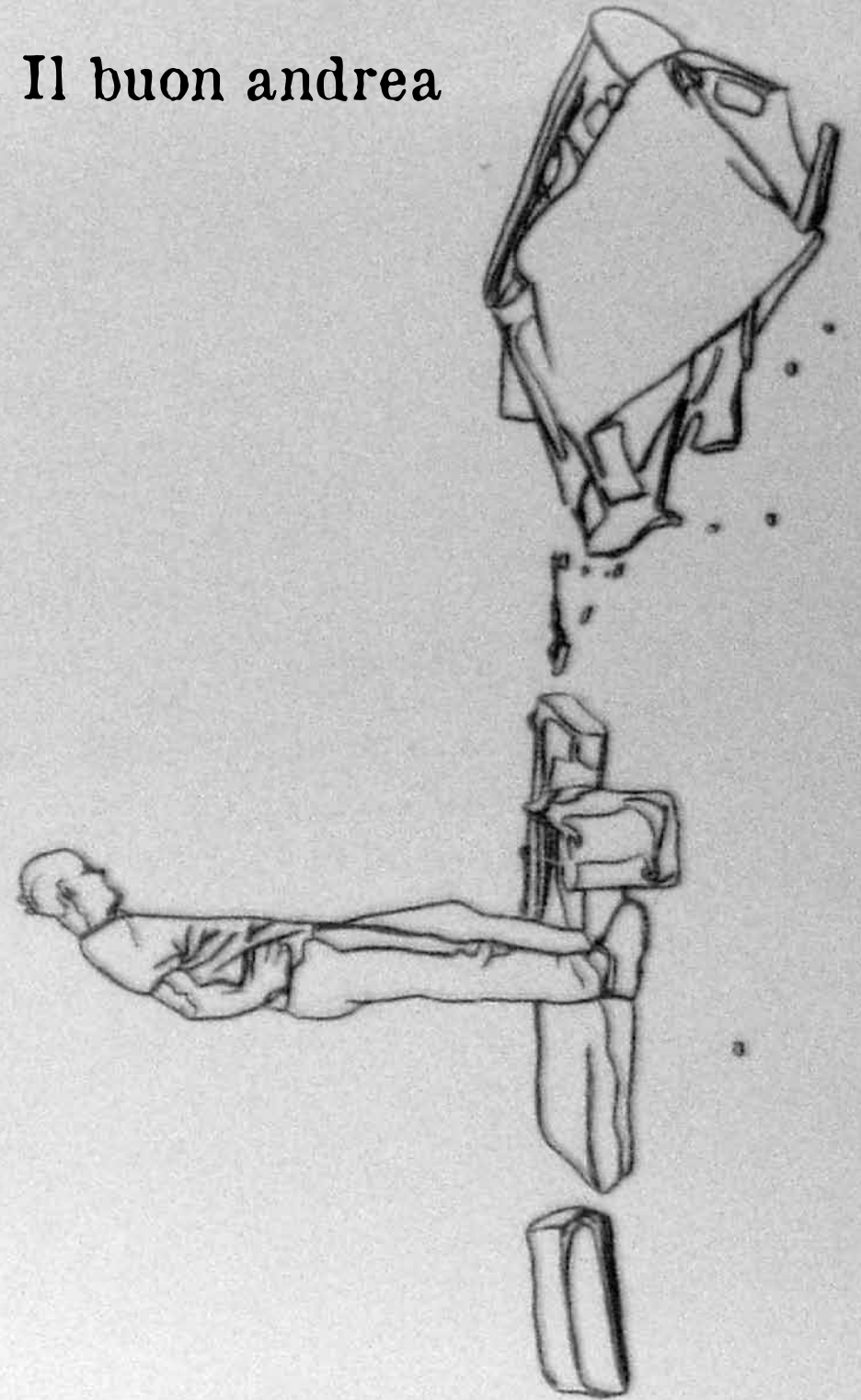
I am going to die, I am going to die even though I won't really realise it.

But I am going to drown in this sea of bullshit.

Tatiana Carelli



Il buon andrea



(The good old andrea), 2003

Good old andrea / A continuity shot

A contemporary idler is dozing on the sofa in broad daylight, just like Donald Duck. The atmosphere is of yet another day wasted, which can come to an early end without much regret. The sofa is the emblem of failure, as it is in Andy Capp. It's a pity that such entertaining associations must soon be replaced by more disturbing ones: the sofa is alive. Just like Man Ray's spiked iron, this sofa comes to life to become an enemy. Perfectly equipped in work clothes (with T-shirt, worn jeans and accident shoes), good old andrea is so angry he can destroy it in less than five minutes. The same old andrea, who is filmed by a close circuit camera while been captured and then closed up in a freezer. A never-ending live show of violence and fury, to the end of one's strenght. Notwithstanding the exhibition of its own ignorance, action is carried out completely and with determination. Nor is an almost inert cushion spared by andrea's both harmonic and furios project. He is a sofa tamer by profession, moving sofa from one place to the other at the cost of a hight physical effort. No cultural salon here, no drawing-room gossip. The surreal image of a removal in its intermediate stages instead, like the one which deeply affected Giorgio De Chirico, when, walking on the streets of Rome, he came up by chance against the furniture of a whole house, which was temporarily furnishing the pavement. So andrea's destruction of the sofa, his obstinate annihilation, is an offensive which reminds us of a naughty boy screaming: I'll break it all. Or a tragedy of jealousy innocently told by a pop song: "you left me canary bird without water / you left me cat without meat..." by our good old Enzo Jannacci.

Alessandra Galletta

drawing: carbon-copy on paper, cm 21x29
video: color, sound, 4'34"
installation: broken sofa, life size



L'ENTRÉE DES GLADIATEURS

2004



Andrea Contin primarily works in video as a form of self-portraiture to investigate the depths of his own emotions as well as the limits and expectations of his relationship with others.

In his videos, Contin most often places himself within an invented set of regulations posed to compromise his independence or he becomes the creator of situations that are impossible to resolve.

L'entrée des gladiateurs is a fixed, close-up shot of the artist in clown face as he rapidly smokes a joint within four minutes. The initial stoic face of the clown tragically disintegrates into a pained expression in dialogue with the spectator.

In effect, the traditional function of a mask to obscure and hide the personality of the performer beneath fails. With each puff of marijuana, Contin's altered psyche is made more apparent in his facial expression, transforming him into a performer vulnerable to his public.

Angélique Campens, Erica Cooke and Chris Fitzpatrick

video: color, sound, 2'35"



Ne me quitte pas

2005



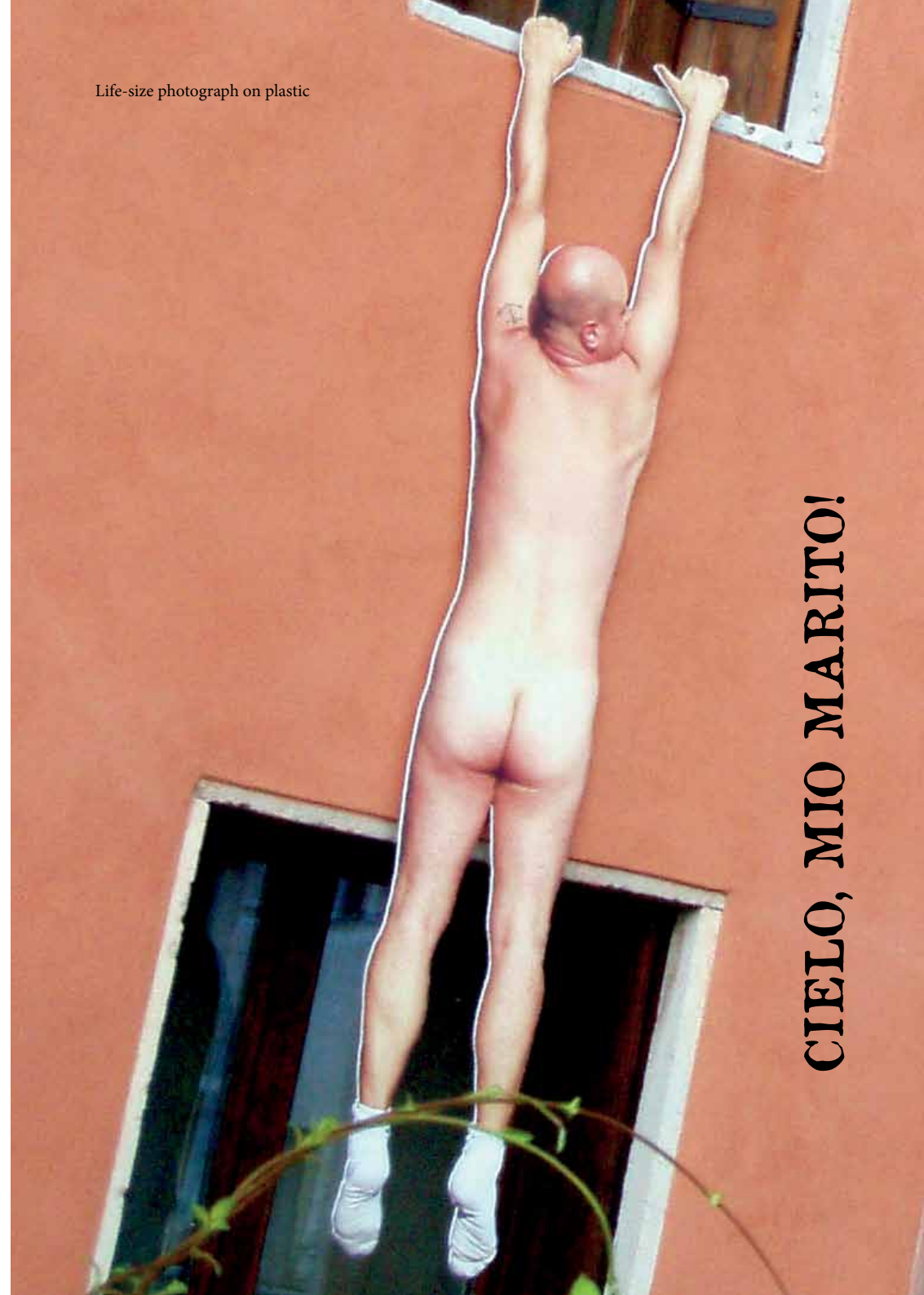
Performance
production still: c-print

(Damn, my husband!), 2005

He is an anomalous artist, who invents forms and figures which go beyond art and in this respect, perhaps, he is the most emblematic artist in our exhibition. Generally speaking, he sets up sequences which imitate sequences which actually happen in life, because he creates what might be described as copies of reality, without the said copies actually needing to represent, since they are not representations but absolutely real actions. They are studied on a phantasmatic level as they become slices of life allowing themselves to be relived as slices, samples and ready-mades of subjects taken from everyday existence. Contin lives art as if it were just like ordinary life, so he takes great risks with interference. Perhaps this is just a coincidence, but in quantum physics interference is the principle which makes things work, rather like what happens in art where all works can be understood in terms of interference, which weaves them together, intercepts them and standardises them, so that each and every one of us can, at the same time and making the very same investment, enter and exit (at the same instant) lots of works of art.

Salvatore Fazia

Life-size photograph on plastic



CIELO, MIO MARITO!

Dai e dai lu vitti lu vitti lu vitti
pigghia la fiocina accidilu accidilu accidilu ahh...

te pigghiaru 'a la fimminedda drittu drittu 'ntra lu cori
e chiancia di duluri ahi ahi ahi ahi ahi ahi
e la varca la strascinava e lu sangu ni curria
e lu masculu chiancia ahi ahi ahi ahi ahi ahi

e lu masculu paria 'mpazzutu
mi dicia bedda mia nun chiancìri
bedda nun chiancìri
dimmi tia c'haju a fari...?

Rispunnia la fimminedda
ccu nnu filu e filu 'i vuci
scappa scappa amuri miu
'ca sinò t'accidunu...

No no no no no amuri miu
si tu mori vogghiu murìri 'nzemi a tia
si tu mori amuri miu vogghiu murìri...

Ccu nu saltu si truvàu ccu issa
'neucchiu 'neucchiu cori a cori
e accussì finìu l'amuri
di du' pisci sfurtunati...

Dai e dai lu vitti lu vitti lu vitti
c'è puru lu masculu
pigghia la fiocina accidilu accidilu ahhh...

Chist'è 'na storia
d'un pisci spada
storia d'amuri

Domenico Modugno, Lu pisce spada (The sword-fish), RCA, 1954

LU PISCE, 2004-06



“The Town That Forgot How to Breathe” by the Canadian novelist Kenneth J. Harvey is a story about a strange illness which hits a town of fishermen called Bareneed in Newfoundland, New Caledonia. For no apparent reason, the local inhabitants suddenly lose the capacity to breathe – in other words they die like “fish out of water”.

This is the sea’s revenge, dead people with no graves but, above all, fish ripped from the waves and left to die in the air, one of the most agonising things in the animal world and the most widely overlooked and ignored.

Andrea Contin’s video clip, a short story about a fishing expedition, provides a brief overview of marine life, which has kept its age-old rhythms and unfolds in a never-changing climate of ritual indifference.

You need to look away from the pictures and listen instead to the angst-ridden voice of Modugno, who sings about dying fish and the the cruel celebration of slaughter. Despite all the faces appearing on screen, you need to focus on the ropes, nets, bits of old boats swept up by the foamy waves, the decapitated fish lying on the bottom of a boat which almost looks like the face of a person. This is the work of an artist transforming a documentary into a metaphor for retaliation.

That is how Ulysses’ enemies, the usurpers of this thrown, died way back in the ancient times of the Odyssey, “....lying in the dust and weltering in their blood....like fishes which fishermen have netted out of the sea, and thrown upon the beach to lie gasping for water till the heat of the sun makes an end of them.” (Book XXII)

Maria Grazia Ciani



video: color, sound, 3' 27"
production stills: c-prints, cm 35x50
drawing: pencil on paper, cm 30x21

I count the days we are apart.
Around me soil, sea, soil.

Sea...
Always nothing but sea. Sea, sea and more sea.
In my eyes, infinite, eternal, nerve-racking like my waiting.
As liquid as lonely tears.

And soil.
Sand and soil, in my hands, under my feet.
Soil I can stand on, anchoring me to our life, rooting me to
our plans, connecting me to our dreams.
Sand which changes shape, carried by the wind and slipping
through my fingers like our hopes.
As changing as the waves, as ungraspable as destiny.

And then the wind.
A gentle breeze easing the absence, a warm and consoling
breath. A storm disturbing my lonely sleep, tormenting my
already disturbing yearning for your return.

But which return? Another return. Always followed by another
departure.

And once again I am left here on the shore, watching a trail
of foam disappear into the distance.
At the mercy of the memory of our last embrace.
Parched by the fear of never being kissed again.

Lara



CASTA DIVA, 2008



video: color, sound, 6'20"
Casta Diva, aria from *Norma* by Vincenzo Bellini, 1831
performed by Maria Callas

...perche' un cuore giace inerte
rossastro sulla strada
e un gatto se lo mangia
tra gente indifferente

...cause a reddish heart lies
motionless on the ground
being eaten by a cat
as people walk by unconcerned

Piero Ciampi, Adius, 1975

ADIUS, 2008



Murano glass, about cm 12x8x8

It is the artist who, thanks to their visionary foresight, manages to make that great leap of faith in order to catch sight of and bring us a symbol of salvation. It is the artist, amongst all men, who has the ability to read, grasp, sense and embrace a different vision of things, so as to show the way for others.

A sign that guides us and indicates the way ahead.

Bestowing meaning on the suffering of modern-day man, stuck in a mire of inhumanity, along a path where Logos reorders Chaos and gives life to human form by making it a Cosmos.

In order to understand the metaphorical path from the non-ego to the reassertion of conscientious individuality, we are asked not to use natural sensible perception but rather the kind of vision that comes from a desire to re-appropriate oneself in a process of ongoing freedom, in which the Ego becomes Human as it saves itself from automatic destructive instincts.

The Ego only becomes Human at that very moment when it regains its own sovereignty and acknowledges it in the person standing before it: sovereignty which, alone, safeguards the heart against everybody else.

Luisa Altafini



The beast and the Heart, 2009

(...) Contin makes use of bits of tailor's dummies, fans, vases, ashtrays, anything which can be part of that gang of friends and treasures which make the moment playful and reflective, always full of fresh stimuli. His approach is empirical, based on tests and trials, distinguished by sensitive dexterity which comes from sculpture but, at the same time, expresses his need for physical contact with matter, human contact with his work. This is where physicality can be seen again, at times moody, combining childish emotion with wise adult humour.

Claudio Musso

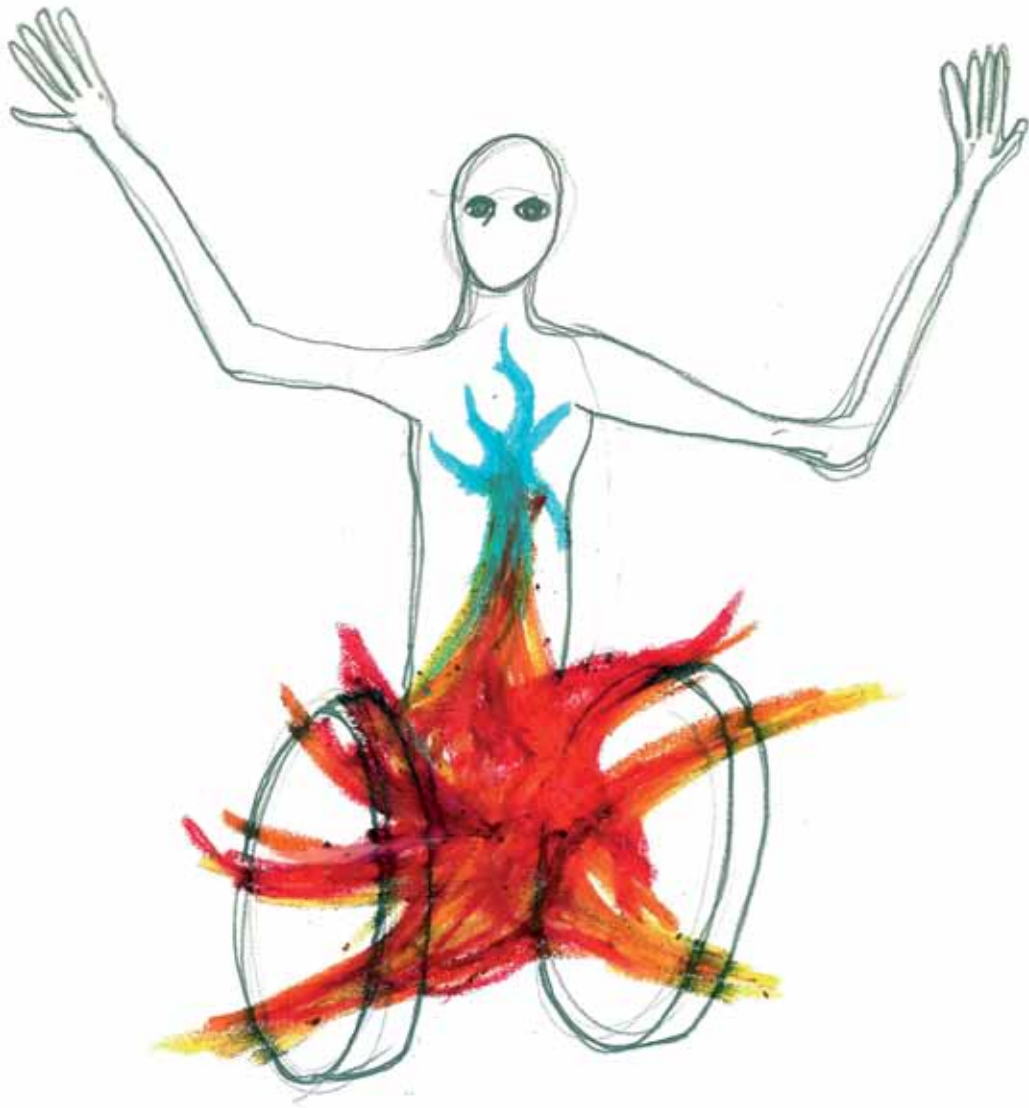


above: Installation view, Scope Art Show, Basel, 2009
next page: *Lento*, 2009, assemblage, about cm 60x80x30



Famiglia Cristiana, 2009, vintage photograph, marker on glass, cm 24x19





Me (as I am), 2009, pencil and oil pastel on paper, cm 42x29,7



Luigino (self-portrait), 2010, assemblage, life size



MATELLO
2011

performance
video: color, sound, 4'10"
production stills: c-print



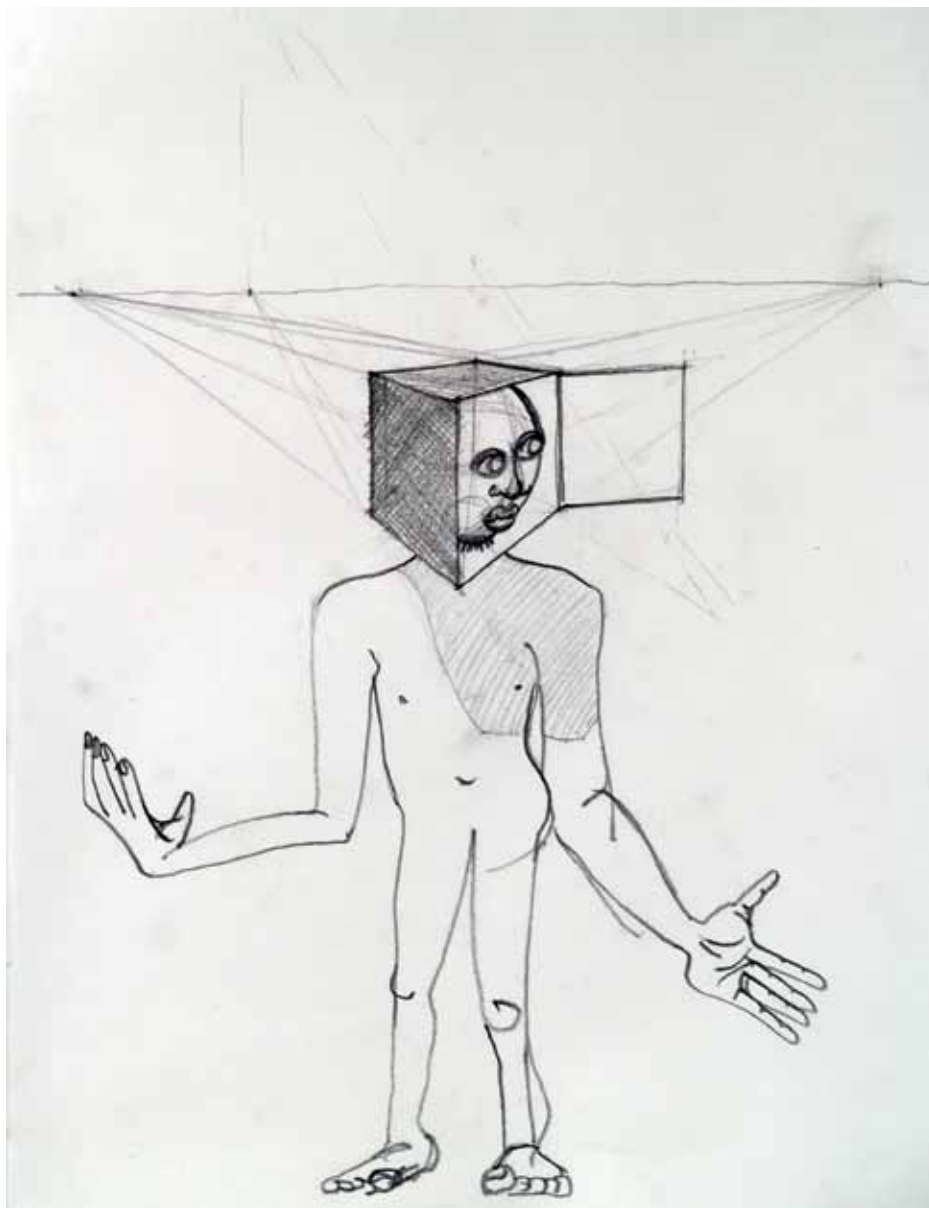


P.S.

I have never been interested in works created around..., those that talk about....., which deal with....., and, above all, look at... I particularly hate those that investigate! I love works which dream of being indispensable, simple and unique. I love Closed Works, whose physicality is embarrassing, which are already formally set down, while Open-ended Works present the possibility of discussion and all the usual chitchat about..... When Andrea talked to me about his love of boxing, showing me what he was working on, I felt that the punches themselves were a conscious, melancholy dream about the very centre of life. No parcelling out, no working around the edges and drifting off, just opening fire right at the centre. Slightly embarrassed he told me (I know just how embarrassed a big 15 stone man can feel as he says “Important” things) that he was thinking about the fight between Cain and Abel, the first punches thrown, the first clash. As I studied his drawings with their decisive and refined strokes, I thought about the tender desperation of the voice of the artist, who, caught up in a mattress, kept on endlessly repeating: If I were fire I would set things alight.. a work which is physically closed but which opens up a be experienced with joy and happiness.

Marco Cingolani





Prospettiva (Perspective), 2009, pencil on paper, cm 42x29,7

Andrea Contin

b. 1971 in Padova, Italy. Lives and work in Milano and Venezia.

An eclectic, clever and cutting artist, drawer, installation designer and video artist with great evocative powers and an irony which captures the farce inherent in life by means of a deliberately contrived formed of nastiness and elegant emotional splatter.

Martina Cavallarin

Contin's work combines a powerful physical presence with an amusing and thought-provoking use of the body. With lightness and profundity, he is not afraid to touch on issues and archetypes at the very foundations of life, such as death and struggle, either ritualistic or just to survive.

Lara Facco

(...) creator of objects, installations and performances, whose conceptual intention is expressed in terms of rigorous synthesis and irony, based on modern mass-media means of communication, which combines aesthetic and visual codes with verbal codes.

Alfredo Sigolo

selected solo show

2011 As a Clown, Factory-Art gallery, Berlin (D)

Matello, Piscine Padovanuoto, Padova (I), curated by Enrico Gusella and produced by Centro Nazionale di Fotografia, Padova, for Padova Aprile Fotografia 2011

2010 Deux sexe-maniacs - Ben Vautier e Andrea Contin, Spazio MAKs, Genova (I), curated by Caterina Gualco, texts by Lara Facco and Claudio Musso

2009 The Beast and the Heart, Scope Art Show, Basel (CH), with Factory-Art gallery, Berlin (D)

2008 Adius, Factory-Art gallery, Trieste (I)

2006 Lu pisce, Scuderie di Palazzo Moroni, Padova (I), curated by Enrico Gusella

Una furtiva lacrima, UnimediaModern, Genova (I), text by Tatiana Carelli

2005 Know How, Public Library happening, curated by GC.AC, Monfalcone (I)

2004 Il buon andrea, Dispari & Dispari Project, Reggio Emilia (I), curated by Andrea Sassi

2003 cq, galleria A+A, Slovene Central for Visual Art, Venezia (I)

Versus, Circuit Association d'Art Contemporaine, Lausanne (CH), text by Michele Robecchi

2002 Versus, Arte & Ricambi, Verona (I), text by Michele Robecchi

2001 Enola Play, with Lorenzo Scotto Di Luzio and Pierluigi Calignano, Antonio Colombo Arte Contemporanea, Milano (I), curated by Raffaele Gavarro

I facchini sono sempre innamorati, Placentia Arte, Piacenza (I)

2000 Albergo diurno, Loft Arte, Valdagno (I), text by Tiziano Scarpa

S'i' fosse foco, Zone c/o il graffio, Bologna (I), curated by Guido Molinari

1999 Freezer, Fioretto Arte Contemporanea, Padova (I),

texts by Maura Pozzati and Guido Bartorelli

Collezioni (i miei istinti primari), Teatro Miela, Trieste (I), curated by Maria Campitelli

Collezione di Farfalle, Galleria Estro, Padova (I), text by Sonia Rosso

selected group show

2010 Persona in meno, Palazzo Re Rebaudengo, Guarene d'Alba (I) / Palazzo Ducale, Genova (I), curated by Angelique Campens, Erica Cooke and Chris Fitzpatrick, organized by Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Torino (I), and Fondazione Garrone, Genova (I)

Art Stays-8th International Festival of Contemporary Art, Ptuj (SLO), curated by Manuel Frara
Act Art 8-Censored, The Islington Metal Works, London, (UK), curated by Oliver Frost and Marc Massive

Andrea Contin and his students, Scatola Bianca, Venezia (I), curated by Martina Cavallarin, in collaboration with Boston University Art Studio Program and Scuola Internazionale di Grafica, Venezia
L'uomo ridotto, Brown Project, Milano (I)

2009 UPUPA, BLUorG, Bari (I), curated by Grazia De Palma

Art Happens Now, GoClick Limited, Verona (I), curated by SmartArea

2008 The Scientist, Sala Estense, Ferrara (I), curated by Vitaliano Teti and Ilenia Mazzoni

2007 Videoart Yearbook 2007, Chiostro di Santa Cristina, Bologna (I), and other sites, curated by Renato Barilli, Alessandra Borgogelli, Paolo Granata, Silvia Grandi, Fabiola Naldi and Paola Segal
WORDS/PAROLE, A multilingual homage to Allan Kaprow, Unimediomodern, Genova (I)

2006 CRASH!, MudimaDrie, Antwerpen (B), curated by Gianluca Ranzi

Bigscreen Italia, Yunnan Arts Institute YanBoTing, Kunming (CN)

Open space, Centro Culturale Candiani, Mestre (I), curated by Lara Facco

Senza Famiglia, Palazzina della Società della Promotrice delle Belle Arti, Torino (I), curated by Laura Carcano

Catodica, Galleria LipanjePuntin Arte Contemporanea, Trieste (I), curated by Maria Campitelli

2005 Clip.it, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Torino (I) - Prague Biennale 2, Praha (CZ), curated by Luca Beatrice

SerrOne - biennalegiovani.monza.05, Villa Reale, Monza (I), curated by Ermanno Krumm
Finalist at the contest **Premio Masaï Art Factory 2005**, AssabOne, Milano (I), curated by Giuliana Carusi Setari, Giò Marconi, Lucia Matino, Roberto Pinto and Gabi Scardi

Un cuscino per sognare, Palazzo Casotti, Reggio Emilia (I) - Kult Fabrik, München (D), curated by Rosanna Chiessi and Andrea Sassi

Senza Dubbio - XXX Biennale d'Arte di Trissino, Trissino (I), curated by Marco Cingolani

2004-2006 On Air: video in onda dall'Italia, GC.AC - Galleria Comunale d'Arte Contemporanea, Monfalcone (I) - MACRO, Roma (I) - Centro d'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato (I) - Kunst Meran, Merano (I) - Careof, Milano (I) - Belef. Belgrad Summer Festival, Beograd (SRB) - Istitut for Italian Culture in South Africa, Pretoria (ZA), curated by Andrea Bruciati and Antonella Crippa. Work acquired by contemporary italian video-art archives of Istitut for Italian Culture in Beograd (SRB)

2004 Suburbia, Chiostri di S. Domenico, Reggio Emilia (I), curated by Marinella Paderni and Marco Senaldi

Armoury, Trevi Flash Art Museum, Trevi (I), curated by Luca Beatrice and Laura Carcano

Video Dia Loghi, Centre Culturel Français, Torino (I), curated by Willy Darko and Mario Bertoni

2003 IV Premio Querini Stampalia FURLA per l'Arte, Venezia (I) (invited artist),

2002 Tensio, GC.AC Monfalcone (I), curated by Andrea Bruciati

Gemine Muse, Musei Civici agli Eremitani, Padova (I), curated by Guido Bartorelli

Last Minute, Vecchio Ospedale Soave, Codogno (I), curated by Lara Facco and Lino Baldini

2000 Outlook Express, viafarini, Milano (I), curated by Alessandra Galletta

Brescia Music Art, Palazzo Bonoris, Brescia (I), curated by Fabiola Naldi

selected press release

Articles and citations about the work of Andrea Contin have appeared on art magazines as Frieze, Flash Art, Exibart, Artribune, Juliet, Segno, Il Giornale dell'Arte, besides magazines and newspapers as D La Repubblica delle donne, Rokerilla, Donna, Il Manifesto, Il Fatto Quotidiano, Repubblica, Il Secolo XIX, on broadcasts as RAI 3, LA7 and on Rai Radio 3.

2010 Paul Teasdale, *Postcard from Turin*, Frieze Magazine, http://www.frieze.com/blog/entry/turin_city_report/

Persona in meno, catalogue of the show curated by Angelique Campens, Erica Cooke and Chris Fitzpatrick, Mousse, Milano (I)

Luca Melchionna, monitor pad, Glamour, Milano (I), n.224, October

Eliana Quattrini, *Due artisti con il sesso in testa (Two artists with sex in mind)*, Corriere Mercantile, Genova (I), September 10

Guido Bartorelli, *I miei eroi. Note su un decennio di arte da Mtv a YouTube. 1999-2009 (My heroes. Notes over ten years of art from Mtv to YouTube)*, Cleup, Padova (I), 2010

2009 Videoart Yearbook - *L'annuario della videoarte italiana (Annual of Italian Video Art)* 2006-**2007-2008**, Dipartimento Arti Visive Università di Bologna, Fausto Lupetti Editore, Bologna (I), curated by Renato Barilli;

2video, video-art on-line review curated by Francesca di Nardo, www.undo.net/2video

2008 Top 100 Young critics vote young italian artists, Flash Art, Milano (I)

Dictionary of young artist in Veneto, Flash Art, Milano (I)

Il pittore e il pesce. Una poesia di Raimond Carver, un'opera di Carlo Dal Cielo (The painter and the fish. A poem by Raymond Carver, a work by Carlo Dal Cielo), curated by Bruno Lorini and Giulio Mozzi, Minimum Fax, Roma (I)

2004 Interviewed at Rai Radio 3 in the cultural radio programme *Aladino*, available at www.radio.rai.it/radio3/terzo_anello/aladino, archivio 2004, trasmissione del 6-8-2004

2003 Young Italian Art Dictionary, Giancarlo Politi Editore, Milano (I)

FAME-Premio Querini Stampalia-FURLA per l'Arte, postmediabooks, Milano, curated by Chiara Bertola

2002 Young Italian Sculpture Dossier, Flash Art, Milano (I)

Young Italian Video Art Dossier, Flash Art, Milano (I)

Marco Cingolani, *Andrea Contin*, Juliet, Trieste (I), n. 108, June 2002

Andrea Contin AS A CLOWN

October 22nd_December 15th 2011

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Quotes from Cecco Angiolieri, Vincenzo Bellini, Lewis Carroll, Piero Ciampi, Gaetano Donizetti, Henry Home, Enzo Jannacci, Domenico Modugno.

Photographs by Beatrice Crastini (*Adius*), Alessandro Di Giugno (*Lu pisce*), Simone Falso (*Matello*), Karina Griscina (*Luigino*), Michele Lazzarotto (*I facchini sono sempre innamorati*), Gabriele Rigato (*Fragile*), Andrea Sassi (*Ne me quitte pas*), Alessandro Silvoni (*Mi dispiace di morire [ma son contento]*) and the artist.

The most part of **translations** are by Martyn Anderson.

Courtesy: Placentia Arte, Piacenza, *I facchini sono sempre innamorati*; Antonio Colombo Arte Contemporanea, Milano, *Mi dispiace di morire (ma son contento)*; Loft Arte, Valdagno, *Cielo, mio marito!*; Factory-art gallery, Berlin, *Adius*; all other works courtesy the artist.

Press office: Alice Panti, Silvia Gorgi.

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Updated info on www.andreacontin.com

