



FARNESE

ADAM BERG

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Incontri Alessandrini
Alexandrian Encounters

giugno / june - luglio / july 1998

Il Fantasma di Giordano Bruno
Giordano Bruno's Phantasm

giugno / june 11 ora 22:00 Campo de' Fiori

Testo e curatore
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In recent years, Adam Berg has concentrated his work with singular attention to technology and its possible cultural links. No less important to his choice of techniques and the particular materials, such as fiber optics, laser and video is their wider cultural context. In Berg's work, the use of such elements is certainly not casual, or occasional; on the contrary, it would not be hazardous to affirm that it represents one of the central points of his artistic and cultural path. Nevertheless, in this case the selection of these *particular* techniques and of *non-traditional* materials is not linked - as happens in the works of many contemporary artists - to symbolic and/or "relational" values of the elements used, but rather, essentially to their conductive capacity. To put it more simply, the artist does not posit the technology as an autonomous subject, as the sole and absolute protagonist of the work, but as an object - as a "thing" to be investigated, and as an instrument of consciousness. Technology is a tool which, as described by the artist himself, exists in a way metaphorically exemplified in Perseus' mythical search, allowing us to see the reflection of reality by mitigating and locally anesthetizing the otherwise hysterical and emotive rapport with nature (Medusa).

The aspiration to avoid the arbitrariness and capriciousness of life is evidenced above all in the video work *Alexandrian Encounters*, a meta-documentary which puts together various persons, creating a temporally contaminated reality inclusive of a fictionalized history and a reality comprised solely of memory. *Alexandrian Encounters* is a video installation made of three elements posited in triangular configuration — a video, used as a documentary, a small screen posted on a tripod which projects the image of an eye and of a sea passage: "Alexandrian I" and a video image in the middle of a cardboard box called "The Catacombs of Cleopatra" which manifests the geometry of a voyage in which these images reflect the places and their dispersed history. Above all, this work proves the utility in working within the conventional and sectorial reality of art subdivided as it is into different linguistic systems. A reality which does not

pretend to implant itself synchronically with the contradictions of the world but which sustains the autonomy of proper language.

Adam Berg, nevertheless, does not concentrate exclusively on the structural and linguistic analysis of the work, but constructs continuous relations between the internal and external — as occurs, in the literary sense, in the work *The Catacombs of Cleopatra*, where the video image “emerges” from a cardboard tube or in the thirty photographs, *Bruno’s Vincolis* (links) - showing the transitory, mediated (an maybe *artificial*) links between reality and vision. Theses “links” are the protagonists in the photographic works which Berg realized in June of 1998 in Rome; they put themselves as an ideal link between the internal and the external.

In this way, the artist proposes the reflection of signification of the image like a moment of proper research. And, in fact, the images and their sense (but it would be better to use the plural) in the contemporaneity dominating the cycle of works dedicated to Giordano Bruno, in which Berg has worked for almost five years and has arrived in the last year in the natural epilogue with the projection of the video *Bruno’s Phantasm* in the Piazza Campo de’ Fiori in Rome, where the philosopher was burnt in 1600.

The “spectacular” image offered by the folly of the clerical blindness of the monk who burned together all his works and remained for a time in the popular imagination like a parable of justice — by justice I mean that which is fixable, and according to the rule of spectacle, visible to many. Berg subverts the stereotypical aspect of memory and , with that , the public places connected to their images; the screen — that which is characterized principally by neutrality — becomes a place of transfiguration and of possibilities of evocation. For those who practice the *necessity of gaze*, it is a common place of habitation which transforms, by means of the diffusion of images, privileged surfaces into visual parables.

Cecilia Casorati



Bruno / Giordano Bruno's Phantasm