

MACHISMO

25 May - 20 July 2019

Villa Lontana, Roma

Via Cassia 55

Notes for visitors

Bas Jan Ader

Bas Jan Ader's black and white silent film *I'm too sad to tell you* (1971) is the second version of a film Ader made of himself crying. In keeping with the title, the reason for his sorrow is not revealed. The first version is lost; but he had made stills from it which he printed as photographs. He used these photographs to make postcards to send to his friends. Altogether these works are comprised by the title *I'm too sad to tell you* (1970-71).

Marcel Broodthaers

Broodthaers recorded *Interview with a cat* (1970) at the Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles. In 1970 Broodthaers created the fictional museum as a propositional work of art in a basement room at 12 Burgplatz in Düsseldorf. He used the Musée d'Art Moderne to create a platform to show central elements of experimentation in contemporary art. Broodthaers interviews a cat and asks her opinions about philosophy, visual art and translation, aesthetics and market trends in contemporary art. Among the many references he makes, there is one which seems to irritate the cat the most and it is when he speaks about a pipe, we assume it is one he holds in his hand. Broodthaers says 'ce ci n'est pas une pipe' and in what appears to be a casual and informal way brings the discussion of meaning and semiotics back to recent art history, to Magritte's painting titled *The Treachery of Images* (1928-29) which shows a painting of a pipe with the words 'ceci n'est pas une pipe' inscribed below.

Gino De Dominicis

Gino De Dominicis's, *Il Cubo Invisibile* (1967) was included in an exhibition of invisible objects in Rome at L'Attico in 1969. The 'cube' was later included in his exhibition at the 36th Venice Biennale, when the artist set up the controversial and complex installation consisting of artworks that had already been presented together with new living elements. This composition went under the name of *Second Solution of Immortality (The Universe is Motionless)* and has been regarded as the most prominent post-war scandal in the history of the Venice Biennale. During the first day of the vernissage the presence of a seated man, Paolo Rosa, who had Down Syndrome, attracted a lot of attention and violent criticism. After

less than one hour De Dominicis was forced to replace him with a little girl and then to close the room. In an article in the newspaper *Il Tempo* Pasolini suggested that the act of De Dominicis was a product of the state of contemporary Italian society.

La Risata (1971), was first exhibited at L'Attico in April of that year. The work as it is included in *MACHISMO* is the sound file of *La Risata* made in homage for the artist's funeral in 1999.

Jeff Gibbons

Jeff Gibbons's paints familiar everyday objects: cups, glasses, bottles, tables, flowers and birds. The titles describe a way of working and thinking through painting. He uses lyrics, or art terms removed from the meaning associated with the words. His use of paint sometimes directly echoes the subtle, at times, deadpan humour of the expressions. In the film *Rule Britannia* (2018) Gibbons sings the absurd patriotic song, now associated with right wing nationalism. He pays homage to Cesare Pietroiusti's performance *Pensiero unico* (2003), when Pietroiusti sang the first few words from two fascist songs *Giovinezza* and *Vincere* until his voice becomes too hoarse to continue.

Emiliano Maggi

Emiliano Maggi shows *The King* (2018), placed on a slim marble column. Tactile processes of working in clay are apparent in the work's finish. For the first time in the *MACHISMO* exhibition, Maggi shows a selection of short video clips shot on his iPhone. These show the artist during his morning exercise in the studio, where he performs imaginary roles in costume on camera. These are part of his Instagram feed.

Michael O'Mahony

Michael O'Mahony shows *Arsenal Kit 1989-2015* (2015-2019). O'Mahony made this series of drawings in 2015. They show idealised and fantastical soccer players wearing the kit designs of the Arsenal team. The drawings are made using high intensity colour petrol-based pens and exist in their own right. O'Mahony uses these as templates to scan and make multiple copies. The players appear in gestural fragments of movements across the field, or, poised as if for a publicity shoot. These drawings are scanned and scaled up size. This is a practice O'Mahony has adopted to extend the notes and drawings from his sketch books. The scanning process removes the handmade element of the works to create a multiple copy and to give an impression of speed and accessibility.

Luigi Ontani

Luigi Ontani's *tableaux vivants* create a still of his performative acts. They exist independent from any performance and yet they are derived from the processes of performance.

Mythological narratives, from Indian, to Greek and Roman times find a new contemporary situation in Ontani's work, calling on multiple layers of historical context. Ontani has been a pioneer in the development of Cibachrome photographic printing as art.

Cesare Pietroiusti

Cesare Pietroiusti is presenting the publication *Nove poesie (1976-2015)*. This is a collection of love poems the artist has written. He has revisited these on different occasions, for example in 2017 for a translation in German and again now for a publication made for the exhibition *MACHISMO*. Alongside this collection is a particular poem, entitled *La Pagina Bianca*. This poem, includes multiple erasures and corrections and is produced as a limited edition print. Pietroiusti will perform *La Pagina Bianca* at Circolo Canottieri Aniene with Giuseppe Garrera on Monday 8 July.

Gianni Politi

Gianni Politi's *Un anno a San Lorenzo (2013)* and *Cucinare l'oro (2012)* are bronze realisations of the artist's tattoos made between 2017 and 2018. The two-dimensional element is here transformed into three dimensions. This series of tattoo derived works incorporate hooks from which hang tailored jackets made from fragments of painted canvas. The use of the painted canvas echoes the skin of the surface of a painting. It takes us back to the idea of inhabiting a painting and it is humorous, because we can wear these jackets.

Robert Rauschenberg

Robert Rauschenberg's *Open Score (1966)* documents the artist's contribution to the Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T) called *9 Evenings: Theatre & Engineering* in New York City in 1966. Rauschenberg and engineer Billy Klüver devised the project to enable collaborations between artists and engineers from Bell Laboratories. *Open Score* opens with a tennis game played by Frank Stella and Mimi Kanarek. Bill Kaminski designed a transmitter to fit inside the tennis racquet handles. When the ball hits the racquets, the vibrations are transmitted to an FM radio receiver, amplified and fed to the speakers resulting in a loud BONG. Each BONG switched off the flood lights. The game continues until darkness falls. Towards the end, Simone Forti sings an ancient Tuscan song from inside a sack while Rauschenberg picks her up and carries her from one place to another.

Prem Sahib

Prem Sahib's practice combines formalist and minimalist approaches to sculpture and painting that appear abstract, formally clean and precise. These are in his use of colour, and units of repetition with an implicit anecdotal, personal narrative. Each work arises from convictions regarding sexuality, intimacy, desire, and community. Homosociality is the name

given to relations between people of the same gender. These exchanges often occur in a liminal space, or a 'third space' between home and work, between family, colleagues and friends, in places like barber shops, saunas, and changing rooms. *Watch Queen (Variegated) II* (2017) is one in a series of similar works constructed with tiles. The use of material echoes the architectural components of changing rooms and shower rooms. The use of materials references in between spaces, creating a place for observing. The work questions the body and its aesthetic limitations by using tiles to suggest shower cubicles and wash rooms, architecture as space of representation. The concrete soccer ball, *Stray I* (2013) is humorous and it plays with our perceptions and expectations of functionalities.

Raja Ram Sharma

Raja Ram Sharma's work combines the craft and art worlds. He uses hand ground natural pigments mixed with Arabic gum on paper. Of his two works one is a celebration with Krishna dancing and the other shows longing when Ram and Lakshman are looking for Sita. *Sambhand* (2019) (*Relationship*) was made for the *MACHISMO* exhibition. It shows the interconnections between the masculine and the feminine, between the shakti (energy), between Sita and Ram, between the two brothers (Ram and Lakshman), as well as the relationship between Lakshman and Sita. The natural elements in the work represent feminine energy, which is unmanifested. The mountains at the back are masculine, all the plants are feminine and are flowering. The feminine energy is the foundation of all the depictions of the masculine, which is why the buddha sits on the lotus.

In *Swaroop (Reflection)* (2017) Krishna dances so that the boundaries between Krishna's feminine and masculine energy becomes blurred. He dances alone, coming together into one. The reflection of the sun and the moon's energies (the masculine and the feminine) comes together. When these unify life thrives and nature is in full blossom.

Franco Troiani

Franco Troiani's *San Sebastiano* (1985) is made from a column of elm salvaged from an ancient church in 1984. Troiani makes a homage to the artist and poet Leoncillo Leonardi, from Spoleto where Troiani lives and works. The work is an abstract representation of the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian. Troiani asked different artists to make one arrow each. These arrows represent the spectrum of penetration from love to hate, like the friends and enemies of Saint Sebastian.