

TONY OURSLER. THE VOLCANO AND THE POETICS TATTOO

curated by Demetrio Paparoni

Milan, Dep Art Gallery

6th of April - 1st of June 2019

Inauguration: Friday 5th of April at 7 pm

Eight years after the extensive retrospective exhibition held at the PAC (Milan) titled *Open Oscura*, curated by Demetrio Paparoni and Gianni Mercurio, **Tony Oursler has returned to Milan** with an exhibition at the Dep Art Gallery titled *The Volcano and Poetics Tattoo*.

Once again curated by Paparoni, from the 6th of April to the 1st of June the exhibition by the American artist presents his **most recent works**: the *Le Volcan 3D video* (2015-2016), *Spacemen R My Friende* **virtual reality** (2016) and the **video installation** *Lapsed C with photo luminescent screen Poetics Tattoo* (1977-2017).

Never satisfied with traditional modes of production or presentation of the moving image, Oursler takes three different approaches in this exhibition. **The works presented at the Milanese gallery** are ideated in such a way as to experiment the disorientating effects which technology has on people, something which is often to be found in Oursler's works. Thanks to the help of special 3D visors the public is invited to immerse itself both in the virtual and psychoactive optical 'settings' and lurk among the characters created by the artist. In a suggestive staging in darkness constellated by the projections, the gallery will therefore be "inhabited" by **three-dimensional and virtual persons and places**.

As **Demetrio Paparoni** writes in the catalogue: "Tony Oursler works exhibited in the Dep Art Gallery continue the artist's research treating the relationship between the psyche and technology, investigating the need on the part of the human being to give answers to events considered as being mysterious. These three works share the artists interest in fantastical yet documentary histories which focus on the creative dynamics of belief systems. In this way the artist evidences how mankind is never content with mere scientific explanations, manifesting a powerful attraction for everything that it is unable to explain".

One of the works in the exhibition - *Le Volcan* - in 3D refers to the attempt made by the pseudo-scientist Commander Louis Darget at the beginning of the Twentieth Century to impress photographic plates by only using the force of thought. The loose reenactment of the scenes are based on the artists interpretation of research and are presented with the actual photographic image produced on that day by Darget. The video entitled *Spacemen R My Friende*, instead, presents the progenitor of UFO photography George Adamski and a number of characters who share the interest in communication with extraterrestrial life forms during the Cold War area. Together these works are a testimony of the superimposition of extraterrestrial worlds and of the otherworldly sphere understood in a spiritual sense. With these and together with his other works Oursler connects his art to the complex universe that is let loose by the spiritual dimension and in consequence resulting in the most varied cases of beliefs, desires/wishes, dreams and pathological obsessions.

Lapsed C, in conclusion, represents a re-elaboration of photos and videos put together and recorded by Oursler and Mike Kelley during the years in which they formed part of the experimental "Poetics" rock group. This film is projected upon a specially treated screen which glows in the dark emphasizing the gothic quality of the phenomenon of persistence of vision. The film depicts the band on a never ending search for the location of a long lost party, encountering the phantoms of punk and psychedelia on their quest. They are almost entirely to be seen here for the first time, retrieved from the band's archive including elements **never before shown in public** (and not even in previous collaborations on the part of the two artists).

Born in 1957 in New York where he grew up and where he continues to work, Tony Oursler is known for his innovatory **integrations of videos, sculpture and performances**. A pioneering figure in the field of the new means of communication, starting out from the 1970s he has explored different ways to incorporate the technique of the

video in his artistic production, taking the video concept from the two-dimensionality of the screen in order to create **three-dimensional environments in movement** by means of projections.

With the evolution of technology and the advent of virtual reality the artist has found an ideal language with which to express himself with the production of stimulating installations that with dissonant images and sounds intend to confuse and 'disarm' the spectator.

The exhibition is completed by way of a **bilingual catalogue** - Italian/English - published by Dep Art, edited by Demetrio Paparoni and Antonio Addamiano, containing a critical text by Demetrio Paparoni, texts and a storyboard by the artist, the reproductions of the works on exhibit, 'views' of the gallery installation and updated bio-bibliographical information.

Exhibition file

Title *Tony Oursler. The Volcano and Poetics Tattoo*

Curated by Demetrio Paparoni

Venue Dep Art Gallery, Via Comelico 40, 20135 Milan (Italy)

Dates from the 6th of April to the 1st of June 2019

Inauguration Friday 5th of April at 7 PM

Gallery opening hours Tuesday to Saturday 10.30 AM-7 PM, closed on Sundays and Mondays

Free gallery entrance

Information Dep Art Gallery tel. +39 02-36.53.56.20 - art@depart.it - www.depart.it

Catalogue edited by Demetrio Paparoni and Antonio Addamiano, critical text by Demetrio Paparoni

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