

Italian art since the 1990s  
The contemporary facing the past

# the future behind us

Alterazioni Video, Francesco Arena, Massimo Bartolini, Rossella Biscotti, Paolo Cirio, Claire Fontaine, Céline Condorelli, Marie Cool Fabio Balducci, Danilo Correale, Irene Dionisio, Chiara Fumai, Stefano Graziani, Alice Guareschi, Adelita Husni-Bey, Francesco Jodice, R&di Martino, Stefano Serretta, Stalker, Bert Theis, Luca Vitone with contributions from Uliano Lucas, Alberto Grifi, Giuseppe Chiari and Mario Merz



Adelita Husni-Bey, *Cronaca Del Tempo Ripetuto*,  
immersive sound installation,  
38 minutes, 2021.

**villa  
arson**

12 june – 28 august 2022  
Opening : 11 june 2022

Galleries du patio et des cyprès

**nice**

At a distance of forty years from *Identité italienne*, the important exhibition curated by Germano Celant in Centre Pompidou, Villa Arson has now become the temporary theatre – for the French and international art audience – of the most recent Italian artistic scene: from the generation that emerged in the 1990s to that of today. The characteristic common to the twenty artists (or artistic groups) in the exhibition is not the confirmation of a cultural belonging, nor is it the effect of the – more or less slow – sedimentation of a time that has developed through continuity. It is rather a temporal fracture, a missed encounter with history, a sort of social and cultural trauma.

This kind of artistic scene is defined by the disorientation caused by the official cancellation of the revolutionary and creative wave of the 1970s and the need to permit the emergence (if not the recovery) of that which had been removed by the ideological and neo-liberal reactions which began in the 1980s.

The exhibition, beginning with its very title *The Future Behind Us*, explicitly refers to a little explored image of the contemporary Italian artistic scene: that marked by an anachronism, by a basic gap that sees a great anticipatory emancipation such as that expressed by the social forces of the 1970s. As a consequence, the view that this exhibition displays is two-fold and upside down. The temporal fracture becomes the space of an appointment and an encounter with the past – a past that none of the participating artists has lived in person but to which they intend to be witnesses. Bringing together under a common denominator that which three generations of artists have produced is anything but easy in the light of the Cultural dispersion that this scene has suffered over the past few years.

The exhibition itinerary opens, not by chance, with a well-known work by Luca Vitone, *Carta Atopica* created in 1992. This is a choral response to the fundamental impossibility of orientation that is equal to the historic-social Italian situation of the time. We can read in this map orographic emergencies, water basins, the irregularities of the terrain, the urban conglomerates and isolated hamlets. These signs are admittedly the recording of traces, but of silent traces that cannot be decodified, making it impossible to decipher where we really find ourselves. It is no exaggeration to claim that, in *Carta Atopica*, this (historic and ontological) uprootedness that characterises not only the artistic generation of the 1990s but also the subsequent ones, is on display in its entirety.

The crises of both the subject and toponymy, recorded within the exhibition, allow the primacy of the context to emerge, only in the forbidden images of the disruption of the 1970s, which is able to find plural and available modelling for reading and interpreting contemporaneity. A condition of being heirs without a direct inheritance. So, in the rooms, we encounter the themes and repositioning of key figures in that decade who introduced new ways of thinking, of saying, of being: from Franco Basaglia's psychiatric subversive reforms (Stefano Graziani) to Carla Lonzi with her feminist theories (Claire Fontaine and Chiara Fumai), from the anarchist Pinelli (Francesco Arena) to the sexual liberation group Fuori (Irene Dionisio), from Nanni Balestrini (Danilo Correale and Claire Fontaine) and Gruppo '63 (Luca Vitone) to Alberto Grifi's radical cinema (Alice Guareschi), from the more political Enzo Mari (Céline Condorelli) to the conceptual composer Giuseppe Chiari (Massimo Bartolini), from the members of Autonomia (Rossella Biscotti) to the founders of the Centre for theatrical experimentation and research in Pontedera (Rä di Martino). This section of a more archaeological nature entitled *Becoming Ex*, is intertwined with another section, *Exodus Exercises*, more broadly dedicated to subjects such as the rejection of work (Danilo Correale), the passage to post-Fordist labour (Marie Cool Fabio Balducci), counterinformation (Stefano Serretta and Francesco Jodice), non-authoritarian pedagogy (Adelita Husni-Bey), and many others. Both are followed by a further section,

*We Still Want Everything* (Alterazioni Video, Bert Theis, Paolo Cirio, Stalker), where, if there is some form of recovery at play, it is precisely that of the practices in the areas of urbanistics, ecology and media-activists, in parallel with the anti-globalisation movement.

The whole exhibition, that follows a thematic development in parallel with the emergence – from the 1990s and on an international scale – of the Italian Radical Thought of Paolo Virno, Giorgio Agamben, Maurizio Lazzarato, Silvia Federici, Antonio Negri, Christian Marazzi and Franco Berardi Bifo, in its setting between the 1970s and the present and situating itself in France, offers the opportunity of returning to the fundamental exchanges between the Italian cultural scene and the French one with Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, amongst others.

Deprived of a pre-established repertoire of potential acts, the generation of artists present in the exhibition is destined to seek out new spatial-temporal coordinates through the production of subjective and conceptual maps, the recording of collective events, urban perambulations, spatial modelling and the claims against the gender matrix of the built environment.

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Exhibition realized in collaboration with the MAMAC (Museum of Modern Art and Contemporary Art of Nice) which presents "Vita Nuova. New challenges for art in Italy 1960 - 1975 ". Curated by Valerie Da Costa. Until October 2, 2022.

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Villa Arson thanks its partners, as well as the galleries Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milano ; Frittelli arte contemporanea, Florence ; Magazzino, Rome ; Michel Rein Paris/Brussels ; P420, Bologna ; Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin- Köln-München ; Galleria Rolando Anselmi, Roma-Berlin. The Collection Mudam Luxembourg, Musée d'art moderne Grand-Duc Jean. The private collections Agiverona Collection, La Gaïa, Busca ; Gianni Garrera, Rome ; Fabio Agovino, Naples ; Bert Theis Archive, Hefflingen ; Micromuseum Collection, Palermo.

## Curator

Marco Scotini  
curator assistant : Arnold Braho

## Agenda

Saturday 11 June 2022

- 6pm  
Meeting with Marco Scotini  
Grand hall

## Program

Every day (except Tuesday)

- 3pm  
Rdv | Point of view on exhibitions. A mediator accompanies the public in exhibitions to discover the works of his choice. Free and open to all audiences, without prior reservation, these visits allow visitors to understand the stakes of each exhibition.

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## Social networks

#thefuturebehindus  
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## Practical informations

Open every day except Tuesday  
from 2 to 6pm.  
From July 1 2022, open every day  
except Tuesday from 2 to 7pm.  
Free admission.

Villa Arson is a public institution of the Ministry of Culture and a member of UCA – Université Côte d'Azur. It is supported by the Ville de Nice, the Département des Alpes-Maritimes and the Région Sud Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. Villa Arson is a network member of Ecole(s) du Sud, BOTOX[S], Plein Sud, d.c.a., ANDEA, and ELIA Art Schools.



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