



Sanja Iveković - Franco Vaccari
The Opening
20 February - 30 April 2015

More than forty years since their last exhibition together, Franco Vaccari (Modena, 1936) and Sanja Iveković (Zagreb, 1949) meet again in the exhibition *The Opening* at Galleria P420 in Bologna.

The important vanguard work of these two artists, both already active in the 1970s, has gone beyond the concept of performance to develop a new definition of the happening based on dialogue between the artist and the audience, activated from this point on as a fundamental agent in the invention and implementation of the work. The passive role of the viewer gives way to total engagement that "reactivates the processes of socialization and relation."

Franco Vaccari writes: «The work develops in relation to how the viewer/participant, suddenly emancipated from the status of a mere observer, receives it and reacts to it, contributing to determine its form and meaning.»

The space becomes that of the gallery, the time that of the *opening*, in which everything is resolved, from the creation of the exhibition to the definitive experience of the work.

Franco Vaccari, from the start of his career, has enacted a process of emancipation of the individual subject with respect to the whole. He uses photography not only as the indicator of a presence, but also as a tool that permits recognition and construction of the single individual in the time of development of the work. It is precisely the artist, momentarily concealing his own presence, that allows the work to be realized through the awareness in the individual or his or her existence in a give place at a specific time. The *Esposizioni in tempo reale* (Exhibitions in Real Time) of Vaccari do not stage a script in which the viewer is relegated to a passive role, but an action in a state of becoming whose main dimension is therefore that of reception. These works "in real time," conceived and made by the artist starting in 1969, are therefore not predictable and can be potentially infinite, characterized by the ongoing mutation of relationships.

The exhibition includes *Esposizione in tempo reale num.1, Maschere* (Masks, 1969), *Esposizione in tempo reale num.5, Spazio privato in spazio pubblico* (Private Space in Public Space, 1973), *Esposizione in tempo reale num.6, Il cieco elettronico* (Electronic Blindness, 1973) and *Esposizione in Tempo Reale num.7, Mito Istantaneo* (Instant Myth, 1974).

Engagement also forms the basis of the works of Sanja Iveković, the Croatian artist who starting in the 1970s has developed a pioneering practice that approaches questions about female identity and the politics of power and consumption that lie beneath the collective dimension. The artist involves viewers in different ways, through various forms of stimulation, proposing a development of the work that once again is not determined a priori, which in a more or less extensive time frame determines a close relationship with the audience, involved on an intimate, emotional level.

The exhibition presents *Inaugurazione alla Tommaseo* (Opening at the Tommaseo, 1977), where visitors were asked to make true physical contact with the artist, *Inter nos* (1978), in which the artist-viewer relationship was mediated by the technology of a video device, and *First Belgrade Performance* (1978), in which the artist bridges the distance from the audience to the point of triggering spontaneous, self-sustaining relations and *Meeting Points* (1978) in which the meaning of the action itself changes, simply due to the presence of the audience.

The exhibition has been organized with Espaivisor gallery, Valencia.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue curated by Marco Scotini.

Sanja Iveković (Zagreb, 1949) graduated from The Academy of Fine Arts of Zagreb. Her art production has spanned a range of media such as photography, performance, video, installations and actions in the public domain since the 1970s. She belongs to the artistic generation which emerged after '68 and was raised in Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia whose post-object art was usually covered by the umbrella term New Art Practice. Iveković's work is marked by the critical discourse with the politics of images and body. The analysis of identity constructions in media as well as political engagement, solidarity and activism belong to her artistic strategies. In the Yugoslav/ Croatian art scene she was the first woman artist to express a clearly feminist attitude. In 1973 she started to work with video. Her work from the 1990s deals with the collapse of socialist regimes and the consequences of the triumph of capitalism and the market economy over living conditions, particularly of women. In the late eighties she was a founder and a member of a number of women's non-government organizations in Croatia such as Elektra Women's Art Centre, The Centre for Women's Studies, B.a.B.e – the women's human rights group.

She has been awarded the grants by the institutions such as the Canada Council Grant for the Visiting artists (1979, 1982, 1994), The Arts Link Grant (USA), DAAD (Berlin), OCA, Oslo (2008), Recollets Paris (2009), MAC/VAL, Paris (2012).

Recent exhibitions include the participation at dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel, *A Bigger Splash* (2013) at the Tate Modern in London, and the solo show *Sweet Violence* (2011) at MoMA New York.

Franco Vaccari (Modena, 1936) was educated in the sciences, and took a degree in Physics. After his art debut as a visual poet, the theme of the trace and the photographic medium are two constants found throughout all his work (in *Traces*, 1966, he presents photographs of graffiti as anonymous found poetry). From the outset, Vaccari does not use photography to produce mimetic, analogical images, but as the imprint of a presence, a signal, a physical trace or track of a being-there. In this sense, his project for the Venice Biennale of 1972, *Exhibition in Real*

Time no.4: Leave on the walls a photographic trace of your fleeting visit is emblematic. The position of his artwork is tangential to several areas, but what perhaps best expresses its meaning is the term 'conceptual realism'.

He is recognized as the inventor of the concept of 'Exhibition in real time', which he has explored since 1969 in both theoretical and operative ways. Vaccari has always accompanied his artistic activity with theoretical reflections, and has also published *Duchamp e l'occultamento del lavoro* (1978), *Fotografia e inconscio tecnologico* (1979) and *Duchamp messo a nudo. Dai ready made alla finanza creativa* (2010). He has shown in solo spaces at the Venice Biennale in 1972, in 1980 and again in 1993.

In 2010 he participated to *Strange Comfort* at Basel Kunsthalle and he has been invited to participate at the Gwangju Biennial in Korea.

In 2012 he participated to *Derrière le Rideau – L'Esthétique du photomaton (behind the curtain, the beauty of the photobooth)* at Musée de L'Elysée, Lausanne.

Finally, 2013 is the date of a solo show at the Mostyn Museum, and 2014 of the solo show *Rumori telepatici* at Fondazione Morra Greco in Naples.



1. Sanja Ivekovic, *Inter Nos* (Between us), 1978, 4 b/w photographs, cm.40x26 each, drawing with text, b/w video, duration 60'

The installation consists of two rooms which are connected by two closed TV circuits without audio link, and an entrance space where the direct transmission takes place for the audience.

One at a time, the visitors enter the second room.

The private dialogue between us develops as I interfere with the visitor's screen image which sets in motion his/her individual reaction and vice versa.

At the same time, the audience receives the participant's image only.

Galerija studentskog, Multimadijski center Zagreb, 23rd December, 1977



2. Franco Vaccari, *Exhibition in real time N. 6, The Electronic Beggar*, 1973
digital video from vhs, duration 20'

In a square, near a bus stop, I made a television recording of a beggar as he asked for alms. Then, in his place, I left a television set showing the recording with, on the screen, the words THE BLIND MAN WILL BE BACK SHORTLY. The private use of this means, usually controlled by big power groups, had the effect of "instantly mythicising" the beggar and consequently slipping down the social scale of the spectators. So paraphrasing McLuhan we could say that the MEDIUM IS THE POWER. These processes overall bring about an oscillation in the evaluation of our own social identity and determine a broader involvement than what is experienced with a flesh and blood beggar. In this case the effect of intercommunication is greater with the instrument than with the person.

Trigon 73, Neue Galerie, Graz, 1973



3. Franco Vaccari, *Exhibition in real time N.1, Masks*, 1969, typewritten text,
2 vintage photographs , mask, cm.35x103 overall

I had about one hundred masks distributed bearing the photographs of a man's face. Then the lights were dimmed in the room. With a torch and a camera I started walking around the audience, stopping to illuminate someone in order to try to take a picture of them. They would immediately hide their surprised or annoyed faces behind the mask, using it precisely as a means to return to an anonymous dimension, as protection against the excess of identification that photography can entail.

Galleria Civica, Modena, 1969



4. Sanja Ivekovic, *Beogradski Performans* (1st Belgrade Performance), 1978
8 b/w photographs, cm.40x26 each, drawing with text

The performance begins when I enter the gallery accompanied by the curator. I am walking around in circles at the rhythm of the music. Beginning with each circle the physical distance between the audience and myself is reduced by 1 m and the walking speed slowed down, until I reach a position when I start shaking hands with each person and introduce myself with the help of the curator. After that, I initiate a personal conversation with every visitor in the gallery. Gradually I disappear as performer, while the performance continues to depend on the spontaneous actions of the audience.

Galerija studentskog kulturnog centra Belgrade, April, 1979



5. Franco Vaccari, *Exhibition in real time N. 7, Instant Myth*, 1974, typewritten text, vintage photograph, polaroid, cm.33x64 overall

I had the use of two spaces: in one I took photographs of the visitors with a Polaroid, in the other I had the freshly taken photographs projected onto the walls, making them much larger than the originals. When the people who had been photographed saw their own image blown up on the wall, they were illuminated and re-photographed together their own image.

Galleria 291, Milan, 28th March 1974



6. Franco Vaccari, *Exhibition in real time N.5, Secret Communication*, 18 b/w photographs, printed text, cm.92x122 overall (printed in 2014)

Within the continuous, Euclidean space of the exhibition, wholly accessible, I took over a niche to run privately in which I could communicate away from public control even though it took place in public. This niche consisted of two spaces linked with audio-visual communications equipment. The moment of documentation was therefore faced with CLUES, with TRACES, and SIGNS, in a word, at the LIMIT where curiosity had to stop and guess.

Trigon 73, Neue Galerie, Graz, 1973



7. Sanja Ivekovic, *Meeting- Points*, 1978, 8 b/w photographs, cm.40x26 each
drawing with text, b/w video, duration 30'

The performance consists of two parts.

On the 1st day I perform in the empty gallery with the video camera as my only witness. My action in space corresponds to my anticipation where the audience will be in this space and how the communication between us will develop.

Next day a monitor is placed in a gallery corner and the video tape starts playback of at the same moment when the live action begins. Now, I try to turn my anticipations into reality, i.e. I repeat my private performance in the presence of the audience.

Western Front, Vancouver, 1st November, 1978 / 31st October, 1978



8. Sanja Ivekovic, *Inaugurazione alla Tommaseo*, 1977, 4 collage of vintage b/w photo and sound tapes, cm.60x33,5 each

During the opening night the artist is standing in the gallery's small office space, her mouth sealed with adhesive tape. An amplifier transmits her heartbeat into the gallery area as she meets the visitors one by one. Her contact with each person is photographed and a special sound is produced to mark the beginning of each encounter. The following day the photographs are mounted on the walls. The corresponding audiotape is placed beneath each photograph. The audience can play the tapes back in the gallery during the exhibition.

Galleria Tommaseo, Trieste, 5th December 1977