

The horizon line is here

tornare per partire

**ELENA BAJO – ULLA VON BRANDENBURG – RUNO LAGOMARSINO
PEDRO NEVES MARQUES – ANDRE' ROMÃO**

curated by Lorenzo Bruni

Exhibition space: Umberto Di Marino Gallery - Via Alabardieri 1, 80121, Naples Italy

Opening: Thursday 20th May 2010 – 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Duration: 20^h May – 10th September 2010

Opening times: Monday – Saturday 3.00 pm/8.00 pm – by appointment in the morning

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Press office in collaboration with 

Performance by Pedro Neves Marques and André Romão h 8.30 p.m.

“The Horizon line is here – *tornare per partire*” is a collective exhibition curated by Lorenzo Bruni and deals with the theme of travel. The exhibition features works by **Elena Bajo, Ulla von Brandenburg, Runo Lagomarsino, Pedro Neves Marques** and **André Romão**, and consists of video-installations, performances, sculptures, photographs and drawings, most of which have been made especially for the occasion and for the physical space of the **Umberto Di Marino Gallery**.

The practice of travelling in “liquid modernity” can increasingly be compared to a grey pause within our everyday lives. We travel between appointments or attempts to evade them, no longer moving according to temporal and spatial coordinates. However, fast trains, cheap air travel and last minute flights are just symptoms of a new mental approach produced by these new means of communication. In our minds, the Internet, Google Earth and iPhones have eradicated the idea that there can be a time between dreaming and embarking on a journey to “another place”, besides eliminating the space of the account of the journey. Nowadays, more than ever before, travelling is no longer synonymous with rounded experience so that variables or hitches are no longer contemplated. The recent ash cloud from the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull has made it clear that we cannot exert control over everything and that just typing in the name of a place or making a booking does not mean actually reaching it, understanding it or knowing it. All destinations are now possible so that the risk is that if we can be in all places, we ultimately don't inhabit even one of them. Given that we are no longer a sedentary nor a nomadic society, but are in a position halfway between the two, it is now important to give new substance to our – albeit partial – view of the world and therefore to the way in which we address and interpret the signs of reality.

Nowadays, there are no longer unknown regions - in the sense of uncharted territory – and it is not necessary to travel to have contact with other civilisations and discover other ways of “being in the world”. The true unknown territory is the new awareness of the physical perspective in which we find ourselves in any specific moment and with which to entering into relations with otherness. The works in the exhibition tell us of journeys in the sense of their being authentically partial experiences on the part of the artists who seek to discover and establish a dialogue with reality in order to share it subsequently with “others who are different from them”. The images are containers of a previous experience, only to become detonators that create a new dialogue at the moment of fruition. Indeed, the common theme running through the work of the artists involved is the use of references to different places in world geography in order to make an observation “in progress” about the cultural identity of the individual with respect to the collective one and vice versa.

The works in the exhibition describe a specific encounter with the world while, at the same time, they are the representation of the cultural codes with which we observe the world and interpret it. The structuralist question of whether “we see what we already know or see in order to discover new things” finds, in this case, an alternative solution. The modernist utopia is analysed by **Runo Lagomarsino** in the work “*Contratiempos*”, in which the viewer is presented with a slide show of images of figures which refer to the south American continent. These forms are nothing other than the puttying done by the artist himself to repair the wounds and damage within the monumental complex built by Oscar Niemeyer in Brasilia, the city which is a symbol of the western model applied “to other worlds” and

constructed “with innovative/modern/eternal reinforced concrete”. For this reason, in the other work, visitors, by being able to take away the postcards offered by the artist, completely overturn the concept, transforming what remains of a colonising undertaking into an intimate gesture. The idea of life conceived of as a theatrical sequence and the attempt to visualise the passing of people from a specific place is present in the video work “*Singspiel*” by **Ulla von Brandenburg**. The narrated action, a physical and psychological encounter involving a video camera and actors within the space of Villa Savoye, designed by Le Corbusier in 1929, enables us to reflect on the relationship between history and memory, between personal experience and the objectivity of places. The stools of varying sizes and shapes that are in the room where the video is projected transform the place into a large stopover area, like a sort of square, where reflection on collective memory is not just passively experienced by the viewers. The present-day need to have control over where we are by means of electronic maps, independently of the landscape we are watching, is highlighted, by contradicting it, by the “disorientation” created by the work of **Elena Bajo**. By introducing the presence of a sort of meteorite into the gallery space, the artist transforms it into a non-place which could belong to any situation or time, but with a new characteristic – that of epiphany. The same motive led her to make a video of her journey through two deserts: the Dry Lake Desert and the Mountain of Quartz in California. The desire for the unknown, which is pursued in order to gain a new perception of the known, is the theme of the work of **Pedro Neves Marques** and **André Romão**, which both artists evoke through the same subject – a journey by boat – even though it is tackled in different ways. The first work consists of a video “*Nothing lasts forever*”, the subject of which – a man rowing a boat – is shown in the foreground, in black and white; the rower continues to move without the destination or point of departure being visible. The second work, “*Costa Atlântica Portuguesa (de Caminha-Viana do Castelo ao Cabo de Sagres)*”, consists of photographs which are all the same but all different, which the artist took from a sea voyage parallel to the Portuguese coast, treating it as the point of departure for long voyages for distant lands in order to reflect on territorial/cultural identity. The two artists have made a collective work especially for the exhibition, the performance “*A curtain of smoke/marble and glass – on the afterlife of bureaucracy*”, that becomes a realization and a criticism to the bureaucracy and the abstract codes that always let the human beings coexist. In their case, the new awareness of space takes place through the staging of a dialogue between a performer and the image of the *Omphalos*, the centre of the world for the Ancient culture, divided by a large Plexiglas wall which refers to the need in ancient Greece to consult the oracle before embarking on any sort of journey.

All the works deal with the theme of the moving body of the individual and the dynamics that the body creates with the “surroundings”, both physical and mental, that are encountered from time to time. With this exhibition it seems quite clear that, in order to contemplate a journey, it is not essential to know the exact point of arrival but it is of vital importance to know the exact point where one is in that specific moment. In this case, the **Umberto Di Marino Gallery** becomes a “temporary vantage point” from which to rethink and re-imagine the world collectively. The works act like devices that involve the spectator and interact with each other, even though they are by different artists, creating a common but unprecedented horizon and overturning the traditional division into little personal exhibitions usually held in a gallery which is visited room after room. Thus the idea of a journey, rather than being just a theme, becomes an atmosphere and an attitude to be shared, as well as a means of interpreting, in a different light, the individual paths of the five guest artists who always seek to reflect on the role of the individual (artist/spectator) with respect to society and vice versa. In this world, in which cultural differences and a common future need to be completely rethought, the questions “why leave?” and “where to return?” take on a new meaning. For this reason the artists’ images of “other places” proposed as a means of dialogue are not important in terms of their exotic, exemplary or heroic dimension, but in terms of how they can become a means of reflecting collectively on the questions of “where we are, who we are, where we are going and what we are doing”. (*Lorenzo Bruni*)

Elena Bajo - Madrid 1974; lives and works between New York and Berlin

Ulla von Brandenburg - Karlsruhe Germany, 1974; lives and works in Hamburg and Paris

Runo Lagomarsino - Malmo, 1977; lives and works in Malmo, Sweden

André Romão - Lisbon, 1984; lives and works in Berlin

Pedro Neves Marques - Lisbon, 1984; lives and works in Lisbon

Lorenzo Bruni critic and independent curator, lives and works in Florence.