

Press release

## Francesca Grilli

### Anger

Exhibition space: Galleria Umberto Di Marino - Via Alabardieri 1, 80121, Napoli

Opening: Thursday 12 March 2015 - 7 pm / 10 pm

Duration: until 12 May 2015

Opening hours: Monday - Saturday 3 pm / 8 pm – by appointment in the morning

The Galleria Umberto Di Marino is pleased to present the first solo show entitled *Anger* by Francesca Grilli at its gallery on Thursday 12 March 2015.

The Italian word 'soglia' (threshold, entrance) has numerous different meanings which can be applied to the symbolic field as well as to building, geography, geology, physics and psychology. From the technical-scientific perspective, the threshold refers to the value that an agent or size must reach in order to produce a specific phenomenon. In a figurative sense, it also indicates the principle of something, the transition from one state or place to another.

Francesca Grilli's performances inhabit the imaginary space of a threshold. They are a constant yearning to grasp the extremely fragile moment in which decadence, at its greatest expanse, already contains transformation in its embryonic phase. Challenging physical limits, persevering, putting memory to the test and corroding matter are all forms of exertion which involve resisting a force; the extension is crucial.

The *resistant bodies* gradually become more ancestral. Although the personal and emotional sphere is initially explored with greater insistence, the social body with its relational aspects is subsequently investigated until it dissolves into matter. In a reverse process strewn with references to alchemy, the search for this primordial force involves a journey towards an archaic cosmogony.

For example, in *The Origins of European Thought*, Onians chooses words to reach the roots of being in the conviction that each word used by our ancestors to describe reality encapsulates entire cosmological universes. During the same period, but elsewhere, the French ethnologist Marcel Griaule conferred autonomous philosophical and cultural dignity on the peoples of central-western Africa in his study of the origins of the symbolism of the Dogon in which an emotional area of language is assigned to each specific part of the body. To mark the exhibition *Anger* at the Galleria Umberto Di Marino, the artist focuses especially on the passages where the origins of a word can be traced back to various internal organs.

In particular, the Dogon consider the central organ to be the liver through which all the emotions spread, as had already been guessed by Hippocrates in the fledgling phase of western medicine. *Anger*, represented by bile, becomes the heart of Francesca Grilli's investigation in this specific historical phase during the moment of the explosion and in the subsequent phase of dissolution.

Through experimentation carried out during the period of the artist residency at the American Academy in Rome in conjunction with the *Istituto Centrale per la Grafica* in Rome, the treatment of the plates with bile and ink, in other words through anger and the word, gives rise to unexpected reactions during the phase of immersion in acid. The artist covers the engraving plate with the mixture of the two liquids so that the plate is impressed in the cracks exposed to the effects of the acid. Reflective surfaces emerge from this procedure. They represent sculptures obtained by subtraction in which the spectator observes his or her image through the interference of the interaction between bile and ink. Francesca Grilli overturns the positive and negative of engraving: the stencil creates a work which is already complete in itself while the prints/maps obtained by the chalcographic process take on a documentary value. Corrosion displayed on paper reveals unexpected landscapes of other possible worlds where creation can resume its cycle. The fragments of meteorites within the disc that introduces the entire exhibition in the form of an oracle also provide proof of this.

Once again we find ourselves faced with further landscapes of possible worlds, sound and material fragments of celestial bodies upon which the conditions of life compatible with those found on Earth have been tested. On the basis of a model found at the State Recording Library (*Discoteca di Stato*, now known as the *Istituto Centrale per i Beni Sonori ed Audiovisivi*), the mystery record, a sound support created in the early twentieth century with a commemorative function, contains three concentric tracks. Its special structure means that it is not possible to predict which track will be played at the moment when the audience is asked to place the stylus on the record. The initial impression is that the device is defective but the devastating power of nature will fill the space with the sound of phenomena which reflect the explosion of the vital geophysical force (a volcano, a tornado, imploding glaciers). However, there remains an attempt to control the anger of the universe through the repetition of the I Ching which seeks order within chaos.

As already achieved with the work *Fe2O3 Ossido ferrico* (Red iron oxide) presented at the 55th Venice Biennale, sound – a constant feature of Francesca Grilli's art - makes it possible to reach the maximum threshold through which a transformation can take place. The dissolution of personal and collective anger is desirable but is not the ultimate aim: the observation of the process does not exclude any possibility of becoming.

**Francesca Grilli** was born in Bologna in 1978 and lives and works between Amsterdam and Bruxelles

Her experimentation explores the realm of sound, in its multiple expressive and perceptive implications. Opting to utilize the language of performance, her works move from private and personal elements into spectators' space of action, drawing them into an ambiguous and unsettling territory. In fact, two central aspects can be traced in her research: sound processing in all its forms and registers, and the spectators' space of action. If the first is a linguistic element with infinite possibilities of expressive modes, the second is a boundless space of physical and emotional involvement for the viewer.

Her poetic is articulated through video and performance respectively, focusing attention on the complexity of the intimate story and seeking an action of maximum intensity, supported by the element of sound, which the artist considers the most effective means of communicating directly with the personal and collective unconscious.

In recent years, she has worked extensively on language, its metaphors and suggestions as in the performance *The conversation* in 2010. The search for a completely dematerialized degree of communication straddling magic and ritual is instead the backbone of many works, among them *Moth* 2009 is recalled.

Among her important personal initiatives are *MACRO* of Rome (2012) – the result of a residency at the museum – and *The Conversation* at MAMbo, Bologna (2010).

Her work has been exhibited in many venues in Italy and abroad such as, American Academy in Rome (2015), Italian Pavilion, 55th International Art Exhibition, la Biennale di Venezia (2013), Centre Pompidou Paris (2013), MADRE, Naples (2012), the Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea, Monfalcone (2012), the Serpentine Gallery, London (2010) and *Manifesta7* in Bolzano (2008).

She has also participated in numerous performance festivals including: *Drodesera Festival* at the Centrale Fies in Trento, *Mantica* at the Teatro Comandino in Cesena, *DNA* in the Romaeuropa Festival, *UOVO Performing Art Festival* in Milan and *Santarcangelo* at the Teatri in Rimini.

Thanks to:

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