

João Onofre

Untitled (n'en finit plus)

HD video, colour, sound, 3'03''

Project Space – Piazza Santa Giulia 0/F
20 May – 30 July 2011

Galleria Franco Noero is pleased to announce the second solo show of João Onofre in Torino.

Untitled (n'en finit plus) is the title of the new video of the artist that will be presented in the Gallery's Project Space: the appropriation is a theme declined in very different ways both in the art practice and in Pop music, and the possibility that these two parallel worlds would overlap is something Onofre keeps on investigating.

The video features in fact an outstanding singing performance at night of a teenager standing alone inside an enormous hole dugged on purpose in a vast flat lawn in a natural park. The girl sings 'La nuit n'en finit plus' by Petula Clark, while the camera is continuously filming suggesting with its movement a virtual circularity: first a close up of the blackened dirt on the ground, to focus then on the teenager while slowly turning away from her to reach the night sky and loop back to the dark soil.

'La nuit n'en finit plus' was sung by Petula Clark at the age of 38 as a cover of 'Needles and Pins', a tune originally played by Jackie DeShannon and later by The Searchers, Ramones and many others. Recorded in 1970, the song by Petula Clark features her own lyrics in which the desired object is not gendered as in the The Searchers' and Ramones' version (female), or DeShannon's (male); in this version it may well not be a person that is being desired but another thing or place, an undetermined context is what is desired, featuring a darker tone that makes it sound almost like a lament of an adult woman.

By choosing a young girl to sing Clark's lyrics, Onofre deliberately avoids the extreme subjectivity of Petula Clark's interpretation in order to reveal instead the distance between the 'voice' that is singing and the meaning of the words of the song, which may go beyond a full understanding for the still immature personality of a young girl, not yet capable of expressing herself like an adult.

The images from the video - in this as in previous works from the artist - add further narrative associations to the performative act of interpreting the lyrics of a song, delineating unexpected perspectives. The music and texts of a song stay always though as one of the starting points for the artist's reflections, and that is why along with the video, has been produced also a special limited edition of a record featuring the new 'a cappella' interpretation, recorded on a transparent vinyl to be eventually displayed pinned on a wall by a custom-made silver nail.

The work of João Onofre (Lisbon, 1976) has appeared in several solo and group shows in international Institutions, among which: Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2011); 12th Int. Architectural Exhibition, Portuguese Representation, La Biennale di Venezia, Venezia; CAV, Coimbra, Portugal (2010); Centre Pompidou New Media Collection @ Sidney Cont. Art Museum; ACMI, Melbourne; Taipei Fine Art Museum; Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2007/2006); Centro Galego Arte Contemporanea, Santiago de Compostela; Museu do Chiado, Museo Nacional de Arte Contemporanea, Lisbon (2003); PS1, MoMA Contemporary Art Center, New York (2002); 49th Biennale di Venezia, Venezia (2001).

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