

Giovanni Morbin

***Privazione (Deprivation)***

Text by Simone Frangi

Prometeogallery – Ida Pisani

Via G. Ventura, 6 – Milan

Opening: 19 September 2017, 7pm

The performance of “Peroratore” (Preacher, or The art of swaying) will be held during the opening, with the participation Pietro Quattriglia Venneri.

20.09 – 4.11.2017

Prometeogallery is pleased to present *Privazione (Deprivation)*, Giovanni Morbin’s first solo show at the gallery. The exhibition concentrates on the theoretical and material implications of withdrawal - that is, of self-discipline through the negative, and at the same time through allegiance and entailment with one’s body. Such semantic complexity as found in Morbin’s work suggests a similarly intricate political criticism.

The exhibition is designed in three thematic sections, organised on two levels. The space gives the opportunity to gather several long-term projects that the artist has started and completed, paused and then resumed, in the last ten years.

Language and its forms, executive protocols, a-focal sculptures are taken to symbolise the spatiotemporal dimension, to signify both movement and stillness. By blending all these together, Morbin synthesises an artistic practice with no real existence, one that has lingered for over thirty years along the boundaries of art’s mimesis, transformed into the sharpest critique of the institution; a practice that speaks through irony and realistic bitterness.

Conceived as a proactive organism, the exhibit opens with *Atrophy* (2017), a trophy to anarchy that abandons its celebrative functions, and mutates into a triumphal epitaph. *Atrophy* is a sculpture “destined” to its pedestal, with which it fuses entirely. Through a protocol of collective purchase and pre-emption of the whole artwork, the weight of the sculpture and its plinth wastes away, and reduces its value to simple tissues. Thus, *Atrophy* wishes to experiment with the impossibility of transforming an object into a commercial item.

A similar line of thought is displayed by the series of sealed and framed letters belonging to the series *Personale, strettamente personale* (Personal, strictly personal, 2014). Each letter contains a secret from the artist's erotic self. The purchase of a letter pushes the buyer to abstain and censor their curiosity, and presents this decision as the sole to maintain the value of the artwork intact.

The fetishism of such apologetic objects is contained by the trophy, and by the secret treasured therein. In so doing, Morbin reverts the significance of ownership, and downplays its meaning to a mere relic of possession. No one will ever fully own these oeuvres, some will only be the illegitimate and partial holders.

*Peroratore* (Preacher, or The art of swaying - 2017), appears dually as a secondary structure, and a support for action in the second expositive block. It emerges as an analytic replica of some of the simplest populist discourses. This minimalist platform is reinforced by a thorough archive of gestures, postures, and demagogic rhetoric, and strengthened by a bibliography of manuals on strategies of persuasion, seduction, and prayer, it becomes the potential arena for the artist's parodical self-branding.

The gallery's basement hosts the multi-piece work *Tergicristallino* (The windscreen wiper - 2016). Constituted of several automated bollards that occupy the physical space of the gallery, the machines frantically clean the room. Such order elevates the space to a meditative dimension distinguished by the sterile practice of measuring the void.

*Privazione* (Deprivation) unravels through the presentation of temporal concretions, behavioural readymades, and failed attempts to build monuments. Each piece, like an *ex voto*, is the fusion of an ethical commitment, and its material result.

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