THIS IS NOT A GAME

by

Lorenzo Quinn
Lorenzo Quinn
American, b. 1966

For Quinn, sculpture is primarily an art of communication, a medium through which he aims to help people evolve further in tolerance, understanding and harmony. ‘I make art for myself and for people who wish to come along for a ride through my dreams’, he says. ‘How we live our own lives is of the utmost importance, and most of my work has to do with values and emotions.’

Born on 7 May 1966 in Rome to the Mexican-American actor Anthony Quinn and his second wife, costume designer Iolanda Addolori, Lorenzo Quinn had a childhood split between Italy and the United States of America. His father had a profound influence on him, both in terms of living in the limelight of the film world and with respect to Anthony’s early work in painting and architecture.

Lorenzo Quinn studied at the American Academy of Fine Arts in New York, planning to be a Surrealist painter. However, at 21 he decided that his future lay in sculpture, which could better accommodate his energy and originality. He vividly recalls the moment in 1989 when he felt that he had created his first genuine work of art: ‘I had made a torso from Michelangelo’s drawing of Adam ... an artisan’s job.... I had an idea and began chiselling away, and Eve came out of Adam’s body.... It had started as a purely academic exercise, yet it had become an artwork.’

In 1988 Quinn married Giovanna Cicutto, and on the birth of the first of their three sons they decided to leave New York – a place that ‘hardens your human values’ – and settle in Spain. ‘We chose Spain for its Latin character, its fervour ... the way it values people and family, and for its great artistic trajectory’, he comments.

In his twenties Quinn had a brief acting career, including playing alongside his father in Stradivari (1989) and an acclaimed performance as Salvador Dalí. However, he did not enjoy working in the profession and decided to concentrate purely on sculpture.

Among the artists whose influence Quinn cites are Michelangelo, Bernini and Rodin. His creative ideas spark quickly into life: ‘The inspiration comes within a millisecond’, he says, as he is driven to sculpt by observing life’s everyday energy. Yet a finished project takes months to realise, and it has to carry clear meaning. Quinn usually conceives each work in writing, and the poetic text is ultimately displayed with the sculpture, as an integral part of the piece, not merely explanation.

Quinn’s work appears in many private collections throughout the world and has been exhibited internationally during the past 20 years. Among his commissions is The Tree of Life, produced for the United Nations and issued by the organisation as a stamp in 1993. The following year the Vatican engaged him to sculpt the likeness of Saint Anthony for the Basilica del Santo in Padua, in commemoration of the 800th anniversary of the saint’s birth; the sculpture was blessed by the pope in St Peter’s Square, Rome, in front of a crowd of 35,000.

[3] Lorenzo Quinn played the young Antonio Stradivari and Anthony Quinn the same character in adult life; Stradivari (1644–1737) was one of the supreme violin makers of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, working in Cremona, Italy. Many believe that his instruments have never been surpassed.

[4] Lorenzo Quinn played the lead in Dalí (1990), directed by Antoni Ribas. Spanish painter, printmaker and sculptor Salvador Dalí (1904–1989), a leading figure in Surrealism in the 1930s, is best known for his images of melting watches in a dream world of sunlit landscapes.

[5] One of the supreme artists of the Italian High Renaissance, Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) was a painter, sculptor, architect and poet; Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) was a sculptor, painter and architect of the Italian Baroque. French artist François-Auguste-René Rodin (1840–1917) was the foremost sculptor of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and possibly the greatest portraitist in the history of sculpture.
Quinn’s public art includes *Encounters*, a massive globe enclosing a pointing hand, which was unveiled in 2003 opposite the Museum of Modern Art in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. In Birmingham, his *Tree of Life* was erected outside St Martin’s Church in 2005 to commemorate those who died in the Second World War blitz on the city. Further works are on display at King Edward’s Wharf – *Creation*, *Volare* and *Crossing a Millennium* – with their characteristic focus on the hand, the human form and the circle.

In November 2005 one of Quinn’s largest public sculptures, *Rise Through Education*, was installed at ASPIRE, the Academy of Sports Excellence, in Doha, commissioned by the state of Qatar. Weighing an impressive 8,000 kilos, this monument shows a pair of adult hands placing the world in a child’s hand, the arms forming a circle above an open book. The artist’s commentary on the piece states: ‘A child is the most precious asset our future has. Our obligation is their guidance.... It is only through education and knowledge that a person may master his life.’ Quinn created a second sculpture for the interior of the academy to depict striving for excellence; *Reaching for Gold* is a pyramid of seven arms emerging from a base of sand, the hands straining towards a medal.

Unique among his works as a living monument, *Legacy* (2006) was sculpted for Sant Climent de Llobregat in Spain. Quinn was fascinated by the story of the town’s cherry trees and decided to make a piece that reflected this tale. The tree-trunk is formed by a male and a female hand holding branches laden with cherries arranged to simulate human DNA. In this area famed for its juicy cherries, the sculpture carries as many fruit as there are people living in Sant Climent; each year further cherries will be added to represent new inhabitants.

In 2008 *Evolution*, a major exhibition of Quinn’s output, was chosen to inaugurate the new premises of Halcyon Gallery in Mayfair, London, and the gallery published an important book on his work. Many of the sculptures in *Evolution* featured the symbol that has become synonymous with Quinn: the human hand. ‘I wanted to sculpt what is considered the hardest and most technically challenging part of the human body’, he explains. ‘The hand holds so much power – the power to love, to hate, to create, to destroy. I have injected a lifetime of experience into *Evolution*; it is about my past, present and future.’

*Equilibrium*, an exhibition of Quinn’s monumental sculptures, followed in November 2009, coinciding with the installation of *Give and Take III* in Berkeley Square for six months. Included in the show were several important new sculptures, including *What Came First*? – male and female forms lying in egg-shaped hemispheres – and *Home Sweet Home* – a marble woman cocooned in barbed wire. The exhibition title reflects Quinn’s belief: ‘It is essential to find a balance in life. Many times that balance is achieved with the help of the people who surround us and hold us firmly to the ground, and without whom we would float into perdition.’

In summer 2010, Quinn’s sculpture, *Vroom Vroom* was on show at the Institute of Modern Art in Valencia and later that year at the Abu Dhabi Art Fair. January 2011 saw *Vroom Vroom* installed on Park Lane, London, as part of Westminster Council’s City of Sculpture Festival. Also in January, a 3 metre bronze version of *Finding Love* was unveiled at the entrance of the newly opened One Hyde Park building in Knightsbridge coinciding with two further public placements of his monumental sculpture; *Force of Nature II* in Berkeley Square, Mayfair and *Volare* in Cadogan Gardens, Chelsea. These four sculptures firmly launched Halcyon Gallery’s public sculpture trail exhibition in the city of London.

2010 was also marked with several international exhibitions, including at the Rarity Gallery in Greece, the Marigold Gallery in India, the Rafart Gallery in Spain, the Heward Art Gallery in Saudi Arabia and the Ode to Art Gallery in Singapore.
NOTA DE PRENSA:

‘This is Not a Game’ (Esto no es un Juego) (Ubicación I) por Lorenzo Quinn

Isla de San Servolo, 54º Edición de la Bienal de Venecia - Exposición Internacional de Arte

Instalación de ‘This is Not a Game’ (Ubicación I) por Lorenzo Quinn

Materiales: Materiales mixtos, tanque original T55 Ruso, resina de poliuretano, baño de bronce
Medidas: 12 x 12 x 8 m (pontón e instalación)
Ubicación I: Pontón flotante amarrado a la Isla de San Servolo, Venecia
‘This is Not a Game’ (Esto no es un juego) (Ubicación II) por Lorenzo Quinn,

Pavellón Italia, Arsenal, 54ª Bienal de Venecia - Exposición Internacional de Arte

Artista Lorenzo Quinn frente a ‘This is Not a Game’, (Ubicación II), Pavellón Italia, Arsenal

Materiales mixtos
Medidas: 300 x 300 x 15 cm
Ubicación II: Pavellón Italia, Arsenal, Venecia
Londres, 31 Mayo 2011: Esta poderosa y provocativa instalación del escultor internacional Lorenzo Quinn, está distribuida en dos escenarios distintos de la Bienal, el Pavellón Italia en el Arsenal, y la isla de San Servolo. La escultura monumental y su complejo viaje de Rusia a Inglaterra, a España y ahora en barco hasta Venecia, ha sido posible gracias a Lorenzo Quinn y la Galería Halcyon de Londres.

La primera fase de la contundente instalación se compone de un Tanque de guerra, un T55 Ruso y unos soldados de juguete fundidos a tamaño real situados sobre una plataforma amarrada a la isla de San Servolo. Las dos manos gigantes, que posan posicionando los soldados y el tanque, como lo haría un niño mientras juega, son el catalizador que le da la fuerza a esta pieza, el drama y el contexto en que nosotros como espectadores estamos obligados a responder. Esta asombrosa instalación que ha sido meticulosamente planeada y ejecutada por Quinn, tiene un efecto inmediato en todos los que la ven.

La segunda fase de la instalación, expuesta en el Pabellón Italia, simula una pared de ladrillo que ha sido destruida por un disparo de la torreta de un tanque, junto al mensaje garabateado, "ESTO NO ES UN JUEGO".

<<Durante los últimos 20 años, Lorenzo Quinn ha expuesto por todo el mundo, sus obras forman parte de muchas colecciones privadas. Un artista de su talla y su magistral habilidad, estaba obligado a impugnar la ciudad que resume el arte, con la llegada de su "guerra contra el juego que no lo es." Suavemente sostenida por las manos sobre el agua, esta obra, nos insta a no olvidar el dolor del pasado y pensar en el futuro... La obra nos exige una reflexión. Provoca un nudo en la garganta a todos aquellos que se rinden, persisten, miran y sienten... Yo lo hice y eso es lo que sentí. Es por eso que estoy aquí, tengo el honor de presentar a alguien cuyo arte ha logrado detener, por un momento, la carrera contra el tiempo: Lorenzo y su realismo simbólico. >>

Cristian Maretto, comisario de ‘This is Not a Game’ por Lorenzo Quinn, Bienal de Venecia 2011

Para el escultor Lorenzo Quinn, la realización de las dos partes de esta instalación conceptual es un "sueño loco... hecho realidad". Quinn tuvo el honor de aceptar la invitación para exponer en la Bienal de Venecia de este año. Su producción artística es muy amplia. Naciones Unidas y el Vaticano le hicieron encargos a principios de su carrera, tras los cuales Quinn ha recibido una serie de importantes encargos internacionales de arte público en ciudades de todo el mundo, incluyendo un gigantesco monumento de nueve metros "Crece a través de la Educación" para ASPIRE, la Academia de Excelencia Deportiva en Doha, encargado por el Estado de Qatar.

Para Quinn, la escultura es principalmente un arte de la comunicación, un medio a través del cual se pretende ayudar a las personas a seguir evolucionando en la tolerancia, la comprensión y la armonía.

"Hago arte para mí y para las personas que desean venir a dar un paseo a través de mis sueños. Cómo vivimos nuestra propia vida es de suma importancia, y la mayor parte de mi trabajo tiene que ver con los valores y las emociones."
Lorenzo Quinn

El Pabellón Italia (o Padiglione Italia) en el Arsenal, fue supervisado este año por el comisario Vittorio Sgarbi. Ha sido organizado por el Ministerio para Bienes y Actividades Culturales, junto con PaBAAC, la Dirección General de Paisaje, Bellas Artes, Arquitectura y Arte Contemporáneo.

Este año 89 países participan en la 54ª Exposición Internacional de Arte de la Bienal de Venecia - un récord para el festival. Los pabellones nacionales se encuentran en los pabellones históricos de Giardini, en el Arsenal, y en otros lugares alrededor de la ciudad.

***NOTAS DE EDICIÓN:

INFORMACIÓN ADICIONAL, PRESUPUESTOS E IMÁGENES DISPONIBLES

PELÍCULA DOCUMENTAL DE LA INSTALACIÓN DISPONIBLE A PARTIR DEL 3 DE JUNIO

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HALCYON GALLERY

‘This is Not a Game’ (Location I) by Lorenzo Quinn

San Servolo Island, 54th International Art Exhibition - Venice Biennale

Installation of ‘This is Not a Game’ (Location I) by Lorenzo Quinn

Medium: Mixed media, authentic T55 Russian tank, polyurethane resin, bronze coating
Dimensions: 12 x 12 x 8 m (footprint)
Location 1: Floating pontoon moored off San Servolo Island, Venice
‘This is Not a Game’ (Location II) by Lorenzo Quinn,

Italian Pavilion, Arsenale, 54th International Art Exhibition - Venice Biennale

Artist Lorenzo Quinn in front of ‘This is Not a Game’, (Location II), Italian Pavilion, Arsenale

Mixed media
Dimensions: 300 x 300 x 15 cm
Location II: The Italian Pavilion, Arsenale, Venice
London, 31 May 2011: This powerful and provocative installation by international sculptor Lorenzo Quinn is positioned across two different sites at the Biennale, the Italian Pavilion in the Arsenale, and San Servolo Island. The monumental sculpture and its complex journey from Russia to England to Spain and by boat to Venice to has been made possible by Lorenzo Quinn and Halcyon Gallery, London.

The first stage of the hard-hitting installation features a life-size T55 Russian battle tank and life-size cast ‘toy’ soldiers, situated on San Servolo Island. Life-like giant hands, poised in positioning the tank and soldiers, as a child would in play, are the catalyst which gives this piece the power, the drama and the context to which we as viewers are forced to respond. This jaw-dropping installation which has been meticulously planned and executed by Quinn, has an immediate effect on all who see it.

The second stage of the installation, exhibited at the Italian Pavilion, simulates a brick wall which has been blasted by gun fire from the tank’s pivotal gun turret, next to the simple, emphatically scrawled message, ‘THIS IS NOT A GAME’.

<< Lorenzo Quinn has exhibited all over the world in the past twenty years: his works embellish many private collections. An artist of such stature and masterly skill was bound to challenge the city which epitomises art, with the arrival of his “war-game that isn’t.” Gently held by hands above the water, this work urges us not to forget the pain of the past and to think of the future. ... The work is demanding in the way it forces us to think. It brings a lump to the throat of anyone who yields, lingers, looks and feels... I did, and that’s how it felt. That’s why I am here; I am honoured to present someone whose art has succeeded in halting, just for a moment, the race against time: Lorenzo and his symbolic realism. >>

Cristian Maretti, Curator of ‘This Is Not a Game’ by Lorenzo Quinn, Venice Biennale 2011

For sculptor Lorenzo Quinn, the realisation of this conceptual two part installation is a “...crazy dream come true.” Quinn was honoured to accept the invitation to exhibit in this year’s Venice Biennale. His artistic output is extensive. Commissioned by the United Nations and the Vatican early in his career, Quinn has received a series of major international public art commissions for cities around the world, including the gigantic, nine-metre Rise Through Education for ASPIRE, the Academy of Sports Excellence in Doha, commissioned by the state of Qatar.

For Quinn, sculpture is primarily an art of communication, a medium through which he aims to help people evolve further in tolerance, understanding and harmony.

<<I make art for myself and for people who wish to come along for a ride through my dreams. How we live our own lives is of the utmost importance, and most of my work is concerned with values and emotions. >>

Lorenzo Quinn
The Italian Pavilion (or Padiglione Italia) in the Arsenale, was overseen this year by curator Vittorio Sparbi. It has been organised by the Ministry for the Cultural Heritage and Activities together with PaBAAC, the General Direction for Landscape, Fine Arts, Architecture and Contemporary Art.

This year 89 Nations are participating in the 54th International Art Exhibition at the Venice Biennale - a record for the festival. The National Pavilions are housed in the historical Pavilions in the Giardini, the Arsenale, and other locations around the city.

***NOTES TO EDITORS:

FURTHER INFORMATION, QUOTES, IMAGES AVAILABLE

FILM DOCUMENTING INSTALLATION TO BE RELEASED FRIDAY 3RD JUNE

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La guerra no es un juego
Lorenzo Quinn inaugura la 54ª Bienal de Venecia con una instalación llena de soldados de juguete y un tanque ruso

This Is Not a Game ("esto no es un juego"), ése es el nombre que ha escogido el escultor Lorenzo Quinn para, de manos de la Galería Halcyon de Londres, acudir a la 54ª Bienal de Venecia, con una poderosa y provocativa instalación que quiere reflexionar sobre la banalización de los conflictos armados.

Quinn no ha escatimado recursos. La pieza está distribuida en dos espacios. En la isla de San Servolo, se presenta como un monumental escenario compuesto por un tanque de guerra - un T55 ruso - y soldados de juguete fundidos a tamaño real situados sobre una plataforma sobre el agua.

Al mismo tiempo, dos manos gigantes, que evidencian el malabarismo de títeres que es cualquier guerra, simulan mover los militares y el carro de combate.

Por otro lado, en el pabellón de Italia, observamos una pared de ladrillo que ha sido destruida por un disparo de un tanque, junto al mensaje garabateado "Esto no es un juego".

La propuesta de Quinn, aunque se presenta con un mensaje simple, es contundente. La relación entre lo lúdico y lo terrorífico, entre el recuerdo de la infancia y la ausencia de la misma en muchos países en los que lo bélico es algo que está "normalizado". Esa analogía, la de la diversión y el exterminio, debería funcionar como un espejo que nos haga sonrojar.

Cristian Maretto, comisario de la instalación, nos dice que "esta obra nos insta a no olvidar el dolor del pasado y pensar en el futuro" y asegura que provoca "un nudo en la garganta a todos aquellos que se rinden, persisten, miran y sienten".

Por su parte, Lorenzo Quinn relata que la idea de This is Not a Game le vino mientras observaba a su hijo jugando en la terraza con soldados y un tanque de plástico, cuando, según explica, se dio cuenta de que "los niños intentan imitar lo que ven en la vida cotidiana" y "la guerra ha comenzado a ser terroríficamente familiar, y ya no causa efecto para aquellos que no están involucrados".
Biennale di **Venezia** Padiglione Italia
‘Questo Non è un Gioco’, Lorenzo Quinn

GUARDA LA GALLERIA FOTOGRAFICA – “Nell’osservare mio figlio che giocava sulla torretta con dei soldatini e un carro armato di plastica, mi sono reso conto che i bambini cani armati e di soldati dominano i mezzi di informazione, sono una presenza fin troppo comune.

La guerra è diventata paurosamente familiare e quasi lascia indifferente chi non vi è coinvolto e la può guardare dal conforto del proprio salotto.

Vedo i líder mondiali usare i loro eserciti come fossero giocattoli che possono manovrare e distruggere con la stessa noncuranza di un ragazzino. Ma questo non è un gioco, queste sono persone vere e vere armi, e il risultato è tutt’altro che un gioco.”

**LORENZO QUINN**

Figura d’artista che negli ultimi vent’anni espone in tutto il mondo ed è presente in molte collezioni private, Lorenzo Quinn non poteva che “inchiodare” con abile maestria la città d’arte per eccellenza, facendola sentire confusa e “imbarazzata” dall’arrivo del suo “non gioco da guerra” che, tenuto sospeso in mare con leggera fitta da una mano, ci invita a non dimenticare il dolore passato per evitarlo in futuro. Di dimensioni e colori reali, il sito specifico che Quinn presenterà alla prossima Biennale è quasi “indisposte” quando ci costringe a pensare, e suscita nodi in gola a chiunque accetti di soffermarsi a guardare e sentire... lo l’ho fatto e l’ho provato, e sono qui a presentare con onore chi è riuscito attraverso l’arte a fermare per un attimo la mia corsa contro il tempo: Lorenzo e il suo realismo simbolico.
Two tanks come along at once in Venice

The Americans and Italians do battle in Venice, as both pavilions offered up tank installations at the Biennale

As awkward public coincidences go, it ranks somewhere close to a wedding where the mothers of the bride and groom both turn up in the same dress.
close to a wedding where the mothers of the bride and groom both turn up in the same dress.

On the opening day of the Venice Biennale, the most important date in the art calendar, the hottest topic of conversation was the extraordinary artwork outside the American pavilion: a tank, flipped upside down, with its caterpillar tracks running on a treadmill mounted on one of its caterpillar tracks.

Artists, critics and curators agreed that it was one of the most arresting pieces in the history of the Biennale, unlike anything they had ever seen anywhere.

Its impact might have been all the greater had the Prosecco-sipping crowds outside Anish Kapoor’s show at the church of San Giorgio Maggiore not already been astonished by the sight of another tank – this one floating up the Grand Canal in the company of five giant toy soldiers and a pair of 6m-tall child’s hands.

In Venice, it seems, you can wait a lifetime for a tank as an artwork and then two come along at once.

The Americans' tank is the work of the Cuban-American partnership Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla and is stationed outside the American Pavilion in the Giardini, the Napoleonic pleasure gardens where 29 of this year’s 89 national pavilions are placed. According to Lisa Freiman, commissioner of the US Pavilion, it is a classic surrealistic work prompting questions about the nature of international competition in war, in athletics and at the Venice Biennale.

The rival tank, now moored by a floating cocktail bar off the island of San Servolo, a few hundred metres from the Giardini, was commissioned for the Italian pavilion and created by the artist Lorenzo Quinn, the Italian-American son of the Zorba the Greek actor Anthony Quinn.

He had heard rumblings that his idea might have an echo elsewhere at the festival but did not know until this week who was making it. He didn’t care anyway. “It strengthens the idea,” he said on Tuesday night.

He seemed less sure yesterday when The Times bumped into him staring again at the Americans’ tank.
He seemed less sure yesterday when The Times bumped into him staring again at the Americans’ tank.

“It’s very different from ours,” he said. “Very different. Don’t you think?” The Americans thought that their tank was the only tank in the history of art until yesterday afternoon.

Ms Freiman looked shocked and a little disappointed when told about Quinn’s work.

“It’s interesting that there are two artists this year who are doing that,” she said, eventually. “I guess it says something about our society and the times we are living in.”

There are indeed important differences between the two pieces. The US tank is a British Centurion Mk 3 from the 1960s in desert brown. The complete work, Track and Field, involves five elite athletes in USA running vests taking turns on the treadmill while the caterpillar tracks crunch round making a thunderous mechanical noise. Today Dan O’Brien, an Olympic decathlon gold medallist, will run on it and more runners will arrive in shifts until the end of the Biennale in November.

The Italian tank is a green Russian T55 that had a previous brush with fame when Pierce Brosnan used it to smash up the streets of St Petersburg for a memorable chase scene in the Bond film GoldenEye.

Quinn’s work is arguably more personal than the Allora and Calzadilla tank. He said he had been inspired by his five-year-old son playing with a model tank earlier this year. It set him wondering about how both a child and a politician might treat a tank like a toy, without thinking about the grim realities of a tank in battle. The huge hands are modelled on his son’s and the work is called This Is Not a Game.

Sailing the whole sculpture through Venice, home city of both his wife and mother, had been “the dream of my life”. Both tanks were bought in Britain. Neither piece is trying to be subtle, unlike the understated British effort in which Mike Nelson has built an intricate and enigmatic microcosm of Istanbul life inside the listed 19th century
microcosm of Istanbul life inside the listed 19th century pavilion.

“There’s no point in bringing a pretty sculpture to the Biennale,” Quinn said on Tuesday night, fresh from his voyage. “It has to be something striking. This is a once in a lifetime ticket. You have one chance to make a first impression. This is it — make it or break it.”
In every pavilion, a parallel universe

Three adventurous artists struck gold at the Venice Biennale, reports Richard Dorment

There were changes afoot in Venice, where the familiar you find in the city is often contrasted with the unfamiliar. The Biennale, with a budget of £3 million, was one of the most ambitious projects of its kind in the world, and it was a pleasure to see how it was achieved. The Biennale was a grand tour of the city, with a mix of new and old sights. The city's history was showcased, and the pavilions were designed to reflect its unique architecture. There were also new installations and works of art, including sculptures and paintings, that added to the city's charm.

The Biennale was a great success, and it is hoped that it will continue to be a regular feature of the city's cultural life. It is also hoped that it will inspire other cities to create similar projects, and that it will be a source of pride for Venice.
Lorenzo Quinn a Venezia

Filed Under: blog, event, life style, people by Daniela — Lascia un commento

5 giugno 2011

THIS IS NOT A GAME?

Un’interpretazione vivida e cinica della guerra. Per lo scultore infatti non è altro che un gioco in mano a pochi potenti che guidano carrarmato e soldati come fossero giocattoli senza vita.

← Biennale di Venezia

Permanent Link
Mario Perniola
e la biennale di Venezia

Sto leggendo (e ri-leggendo) un libro di Mario Perniola, di cui prima non avevo mai letto nulla, Miracoli e traumi della comunicazione. Potete leggere le prime 7 pagine dell’introduzione.
E’ un libro incredibilmente denso di cui non si butta via nulla, un po’ come con il maiale ;-) 
E’ quindi abbastanza naturale che l’altro giorno un suo articolo sulla Repubblica abbia attirato immediatamente la mia attenzione.
Si tratta di un articolo sulla Biennale di Venezia (che ha aperto il 4 giugno).
L’evento artistico è solo l’occasione per una riflessione più ampia, un’ulteriore riflessione sul cambiamento epocale avvenuto nella società e, di conseguenza, anche nell’arte che sempre più si presenta come una azione fittizia (performance) che aspira a sostituirsi e ad essere più importante dell’opera.
Un processo che va avanti da quasi un secolo, diventato quasi totalitario, e che sembra ormai giunto alla sua conclusione e ... presenta tracce dell’infimo inizio.
La vocazione antagonista nei confronti di ogni potere sembra essere ancora presente, nelle varie esibizioni, installazioni, video collegamenti via internet, ma solo come parvenza superficiale. L’arte contemporanea sembra restare il luogo deputato della trasgressione, ma in realtà non trasgredisce proprio nulla. Ha perso ogni carica trasgressiva insieme a quella conoscitiva, ed è ormai asservita al marketing e al mercato. completamente fasocitata dalla moda. Non certo per il
semplice fatto di essere finanziata e sponsorizzata da moderni mecenati, industriali delle griffe, che sarebbe quasi normale e del tutto ininfluente, ma solo perché ormai è, come naturale conclusione del suo percorso, al solo servizio di una forma di alta pubblicità (che deve scioccare e stupire) che nulla ha più a che vedere con la forza dirompente insita nel profondo di una libera opera d’arte.

Basta pensare quest’anno ai molti connubii in laguna tra arte e moda: Prada, Gucci (ormai del magnate francese Francois Pinault proprietario anche di molti altri marchi come Bottega veneta) Trussardi, Vogue (Franca Sozzani), ecc. Arte trasgressiva e antagonista, arte traumatizzante e scioccante, ma del tutto liofilizzata politicamente e ridotta a semplice prodotto di massa, a merce di consumo. Prodotto di massa ma solo per i ricchi, merce di lusso al servizio di merci di lusso, dominata e regolata dalle strategie di marketing delle multinazionali del lusso. Commissionata, assimilata e divorata in una spirale ipercapitalista.

Non se la cava certo meglio il grande e caotico accusatore, l’allucinato Vittorio Sgarbi che mette su un confuso Padiglione Italia. Anche se le sue posizioni teoriche (nelle sue invettive) per assurdo, possono sembrare ottime, il risultato è il peggior postmoderno, che assembla, senza alcun metodo, autentiche croste e opere antiche. In tale marmellatoso contesto nessuno nota, e Sgarbi se ne lamenta, un Piero della Francesca. L’atmosfera deresponsabilizzata e deregolata ipnotizza l’osservatore e lo rende incapace di discernere, di capire ormai ogni differenza, ogni valore (teoria sostenuta da anni da Mario Perniola: la società della comunicazione intorpidisce ogni capacità di discernimento). Nessuno sa più cosa conti e cosa no. Tutto è uguale.

La vera tragedia malata della società della comunicazione.

Mentre ognuno di noi è in grado di capire il connubio tra arte e marketing (e quindi in grado di discernere) non è più in grado di capire nulla nel caos assemblato del critico mediatico dell’epoca berlusconiana.

Il futile ed inutile accanto all’opera d’arte e tutto diventa uguale senza differenza.

L’articolo di Perniola si trova in alcune pagine (R2CULT, pp 37-39) della Repubblica dal titolo Dov’è finito il bello dell’arte che contengono due articoli, quello, appunto di Mario Perniola e uno banalissimo di Achille Bonito Oliva (giusto perché qualcuno parlassi davvero della Biennale). Sono tante le cose che mi hanno colpito nel libro di Mario Perniola e probabilmente ne copierò qualche pagina in seguito. Più di tutto mi ha attirato un riferimento, verso la fine, a l’infimo inizio, nozione del pensiero cinese antico. Di infimo inizio parla anche nell’articolo di Repubblica che vi posto per intero e ne aveva parlato in un pezzo sul numero 19 della sua rivista Agalma nell’aprile 2010.

“Ma proprio perché è diventata egemonica si apre la possibilità di un movimento che va in direzione contraria, il quale si presenta sotto l’aspetto dell’infimo inizio. Prendo questa nozione dal pensiero cinese antico, che ha concepito il rapporto tra gli oppositi in modo completamente differente da quello della filosofia occidentale. Come è noto, gli oppositi dello Yin e dello Yang stanno solo in uno in un rapporto di alternanza, per cui quando uno dei due ha raggiunto la massima espansione al suo interno si manifesta sotto forma germinale il principio opposto che comincia a crescere. Per Confucio: “L’infimo è l’impercettibile inizio del movimento, il primo segno visibile di ciò che è fausto. L’uomo di valore non appena vede l’infimo passa all’azione, senza attendere la fine della giornata” (da QU) (georgia)
VENEZIA – 2 giugno 2011: Figlio d’arte. Lorenzo Quinn spiega così l’opera ‘Questo non è un gioco’ esposta a Venezia: “Nell’osservare mio figlio che giocava con dei soldatini e un carro armato di plastica, mi sono reso conto che i bambini cercano di emulare ciò che vedono nella vita quotidiana e che, purtroppo, le immagini di carri armati e di soldati dominano i mezzi di informazione, sono una presenza tuttora comune, paurosamente familiare.”
Approached by A Quinn Flotilla

The usual open skyline, dotted with green trees flourishing on tiny islands off the main port of Venice, was suddenly filled with an astounding sight: as if materialised from a dream a large flotilla carrying a huge pair of disembodied hands playing with life-size tanks and toy soldiers appeared alongside us, unexpectedly and momentarily altering our horizon. Lorenzo Quinn (son of the great Anthony), drove a huge art work up next to our radio station. The flotilla was doggedly pushed along by a two tier tug boat driven by a team of Italians, with Lorenzo on board and the metal tank spinning in the dying sunlight.

The work, despite its overly obvious title sprayed by hand in red on the side “This Is Not a Game” worked wonderfully as a moving intervention. We hopped on board and offered up some Amaro Nonino, a special Italian recipe featured on the Oslo platform where we were based. The image of immense ideas floating on the water taking people by surprise was what really struck me. How fixed life can be, and how important intervention is becoming as everything that is natural and outside human control recedes from modern living. Those good things that you do not predict, when they take you by surprise, are a gift.
Lorenzo Quinn (previously featured on Lawfully Chic on 25 March 2011 – the “Halcyon Sculpture Trail”) is currently exhibiting for the Italian Pavilion at the 54th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale, 2011. His provocative installation “This is Not a Game” is shown at two sites: at the Italian Pavilion in the Arsenale, and San Servolo Island, Venice.

Quinn’s installation is divided into two parts. Moored on San Servolo Island is a life-size T55 Russian battle tank; and in contemporary battle dress life-size cast soldiers are positioned for battle. Giant but lifelike hands descend from nowhere to move the pieces. The work is continued at the Italian Pavilion, where the second part of the installation can be seen. We see a brick wall blasted by gun fire, as if fired from the gun turret of the tank. “This is Not a Game” is written next to it.

*This is Not a Game* (Location 1). *Medium: Mixed media, authentic T55 Russian tank, polyurethane resin, bronze coating. Dimensions: 12 x 12 x 8 m (footprint), Location 1: Floating pontoon moored off San Servolo Island, Venice.*
Cristian Marzetti, the curator of “This is Not a Game” at the Venice Biennale, described Quinn’s work and the impact of his work at the Venice Biennale as follows: “...An artist of such stature and mastery skill was bound to challenge the city which epitomises art, with the arrival of his ‘war-game that isn’t’. Gently held by hands above the water, this work urges us not to forget the pain of the past and to think of the future... The work is demanding in the way it forces us to think, it brings a lump to the throat of anyone who yields, lingers looks and feels... I did end that’s how it felt. That’s why I am here; I am honoured to present someone whose art has succeeded in halting, just for a moment, the race against time: Lorenzo and his symbolic realism.”

Quinn has stated about his work: “I make art for myself and for people who wish to come along for a ride through my dreams. How we live our own lives is of the utmost importance, and most of my work is concerned with values and emotions.”

Quinn’s work can be seen at the Venice Biennale until 27 November 2011, at which 99 nations are currently exhibiting at the National Pavilions, the Arsenale and at other locations round the city.