

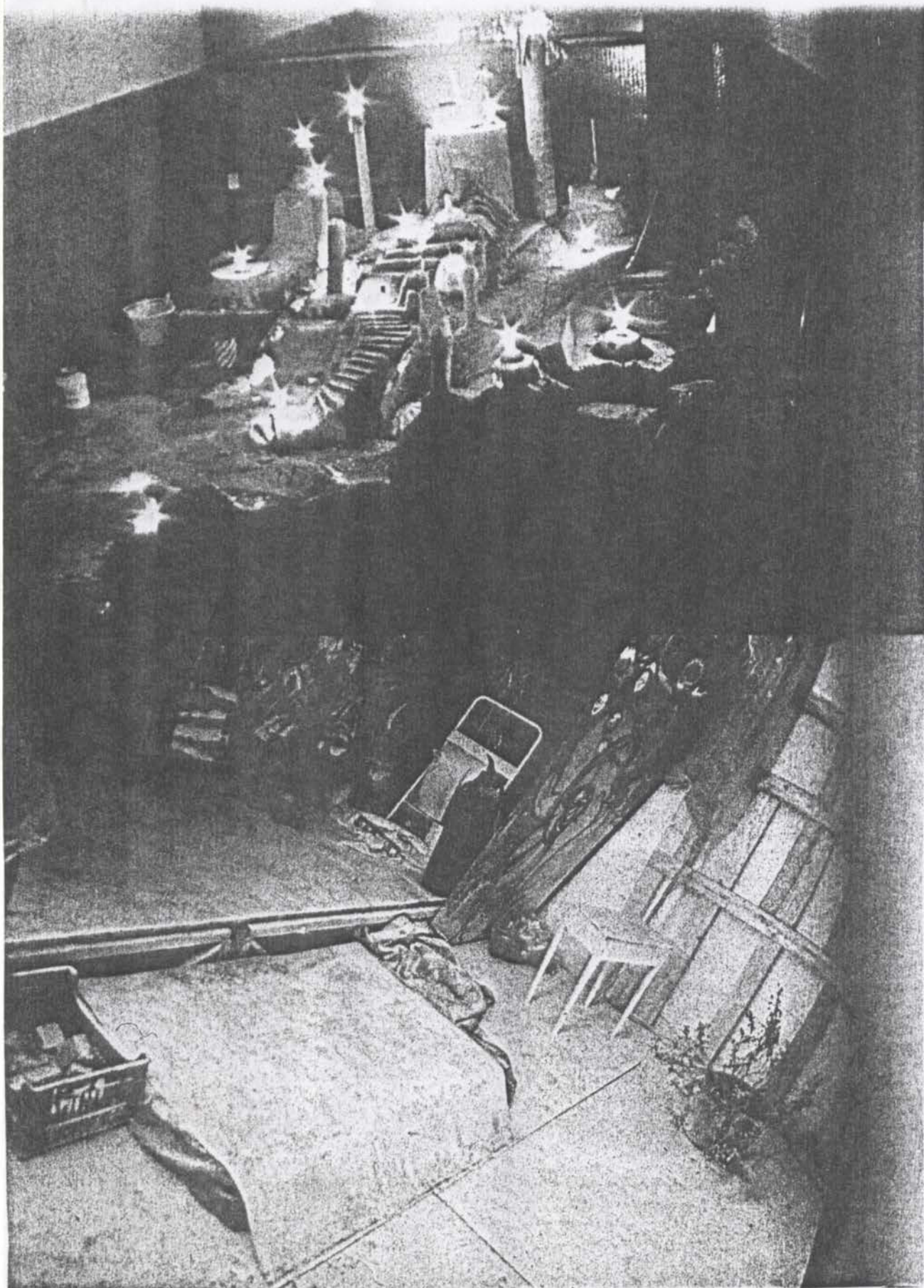
roberto cuoghi

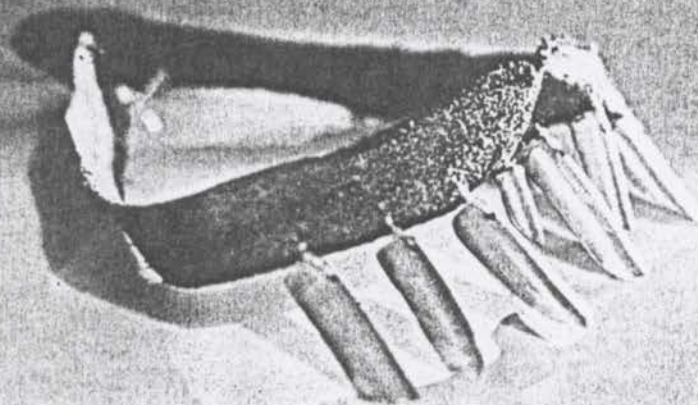
gre

ESPRESSO, not now in Italy a una di S-Risali ti, Electa 2000



*Il coccodrilla, autoritratto
con prismi di Pechan
(Il coccodrilla, Self-portrait
with Pechan Prisms), 1997.
Marker pens on glossy paper,
20 x 15 cm.*





Senza titolo (Untitled), 1997

Necklace of nails for Cristina, fingernails, leather and nylon

→ *Acc:*

Insieme alla Cri di Giona e lui con Martina, Micol e Rapa Nui e Teo abbiamo fatto un bellissimo castello per il vecchio Izzos (Together with Giona's Cri and him with Martina, Micol and Rapa Nui and Teo we built a beautiful castle for old Izzos), 1997

Installation, Visual Rave, Spazio Umanitaria, Milan

→ *Acc:*

Emozione Piemonte (Piedmont Emotion), 1999

Installation view, Palazzo Re Rebaudengo, Guarene d'Alba, Cuneo

→ *In camera caritatis*, 1999

Courtesy Museum in Progress, Vienna

roberto cuoghi It's neither performance nor disguise. Perhaps it can simply be defined as a silent, everyday practice, on the margins and yet coinciding perfectly with life.

He put on forty kilos, he bleached his hair, he grew a long beard, he wore his father's clothes as if they were a second skin, to the point where he discovered that under them there had appeared the body of a twenty-seven-year-old looking at least twice his age; like that of his father. He has chased and overtaken time, bridging a gulf, choosing to be like he who had generated him, drawing as close to his origins as he possibly could. Together with his physical appearance, his way of life has changed, his way of relating to the people and the world surrounding him. He's no longer able to bend easily, has to cope with continual health problems and finds it more difficult to meet his father who in the meantime has fallen seriously ill.

Rather than a mirror, it is the gaze of those close to him that reveals his own image to Roberto Cuoghi. In particular the attentions of his fiancée Alessandra who, with daily gestures and words, as well as the portraits she creates, reminds him of how old his body has become. He is now distancing himself from that image, at first idealized and then made concrete. He is now distancing himself from that life he never wanted to freeze in a work of art or a photograph to exhibit. Roberto Cuoghi refuses to allow what he is going through to be turned into some kind of a spectacle. And it is those who meet him, frequently by chance, who find a reason to reflect on the image he embodies. He doesn't leave many traces nor does he take off his skin when he goes to sleep. He continues with his own life and in the meantime searches for others. This is how he lowers himself into the world, apparently wearing somebody else's glasses to observe what is happening to him.

This was what he literally did some years ago. For a number of days, in fact, he wore a pair of prisms mounted on welder's goggles that allowed him to see the world overturned by 180° throughout the day: catching the bus, going to school and even drawing; as if reproducing an overturned world while being subjected, of course, to considerable physical trials. During this grueling exercise, Cuoghi wrote brief notes that are in effect evidence of his experience. In these metamorphoses what is assumed is a provisional identity capable, in its alteration of a "normal" perception of the world, of underlining through contrast the non-variable part of ourselves. Cuoghi's work is an exercise in alienation, a stepping out of himself while still remaining himself, through an elaborate and dramatic testing of his own faculties. When for eleven months he allowed his nails to grow, he attempted to conduct a normal life while making it more complicated to touch anything whatsoever. He modified his own tactile capacity and immersed himself in a world that for him had become almost intangible, obliging him to develop a diverse sensorial response. At the end of the experiment all that remained were further notes and a necklace of nails, relics of a period of life, material for an eventual archaeology of his existence. *In Camera Caritatis* is instead a work published in the widely read Austrian daily paper *Der Standard*. Collecting the opinions of critics and artists, Cuoghi created a map, writing the names of the protagonists of the world of art in no particular order but in fonts of dimensions proportional to the presumed importance of each

figure. This cruel game of inclusion and exclusion reflects a reality corresponding to commonly held opinion. But it is in the opinion of others that things and actions are made concrete. It's all simply play and puerile fun, a construction of impermanent sand sculptures with no purpose if the memory of others does not intervene to safeguard our existence. And there is no work of art to be made and exhibited, but a life to be lived ever removed from oneself and that proceeds only in the gazes of the people encountered. GM

Roberto Cuoghi

Born in Modena, 1973
Lives and works in Milan

Selected exhibitions

2000

Fuori Uso 2000 - The Bridges, Lungo
fiume Sud, Pescara
Trends: Milano, Salara, Bologna

1999

Guarene Arte 99, Palazzo Re
Rebaudengo, Guarene d'Alba, Cuneo
*Project Globale Positionen, Der
Standard*, Museum in Progress, Vienna

1997

*LAB 12.2 - T.I.N.A. (There Is No
Alternative)*, Viafarini, Milan
Visual Rave, Spazio Umanitaria, Milan
Spazio Aperto, (with Alberta Pellacani),
Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Bologna

1996

Orizzontale/Verticale, Palazzo della
Prefettura, Modena

(chb) Meeting with Roberto Cuoghi is strange and it's hard to remember that behind the serious look and respectable air of a middle-aged man hides a not yet thirty-year-old bloke. It might sound like a game, or a performance but in actual fact it's merely his life, now inseparable from his "artistic stance".

From his early works, Cuoghi focused attention on his own body and on the different levels of perception that small changes provoke, both in himself and in others. From wearing a pair of glasses with lenses that show the world upside down whilst trying to conduct a normal life, to letting his nails grow so long that they hindered his movements, Cuoghi appears to wish to keep himself at a distance from his surroundings. When everyday life is so directly involved however, to speak of art is restrictive and improper. The artistic question transcends these actions, which are the result of personal needs rather than the desire to amaze one's interlocutors.

When Roberto Cuoghi began to wear his father's clothes a few years ago and to bleach the colour out of his hair to make it grey, to grow a beard and to run to fat, little did he imagine that he would be changing his existence irrevocably. He accelerated the natural process of growth and ageing, managing in the space of a few months to make himself look twenty years older. Weighed down by those "extra pounds" and the first ailments caused by ageing, he can no longer turn back. More than anything else his relationship with others has changed: youngsters no longer think of him as a kid while older people, thinking that he is a contemporary, attribute "years of memory" to him which in actual fact he has never experienced. The failure to

belong to one or other group, just as the absence of a definite age, means that he constantly lives in a sort of "border area". As with the portrait of Dorian Gray, his outer appearance is destined to age while his body matures biologically through a constant dualism which, however, makes his life decidedly unique.

art.
the second
youth

confetti: roberto cuoghi

(chb) È uno strano incontro quello con Roberto Cuoghi ed è difficile ricordare che, dietro quello sguardo serio e quell'aria rispettabile da uomo di mezza età, si nasconde invece un ragazzo non ancora trentenne. Potrebbe sembrare un gioco o una performance, ma in realtà si tratta semplicemente della sua vita, ormai inscindibile dal "gesto artistico".

Già dai suoi primi lavori Cuoghi focalizza l'attenzione sul proprio corpo e sui differenti livelli percettivi che piccoli cambiamenti provocano, verso se stesso e verso gli altri. Dall'indossare un paio d'occhiali con lenti che mostrano il mondo alla rovescia, tentando di condurre una vita normale, al farsi crescere le unghie fino a rimanere impedito nei movimenti; sembra che Cuoghi voglia tenere la distanza da quello che lo circonda. Quando però la vita quotidiana viene così direttamente coinvolta, parlare d'arte è improprio e restrittivo. La questione artistica trascende da queste azioni, che nascono invece più da esigenze personali che dal desiderio di stupire i propri interlocutori. Quando alcuni anni fa Roberto Cuoghi ha iniziato a portare gli abiti del padre, a decolorarsi i capelli per farli diventare bianchi, a farsi crescere la barba e a ingrassare, non avrebbe mai immaginato di dare una svolta irrevocabile alla sua esistenza; ha accelerato il processo naturale di crescita e d'invecchiamento, attribuendosi nel giro di pochi mesi almeno una ventina d'anni in più. Gravato ormai da alcuni "chill di troppo" e dai primi acciacchi dovuti all'età, a questo punto non è più possibile per lui tornare indietro. Soprattutto sono cambiati i suoi rapporti con le persone: i giovani non lo considerano più un ragazzo, mentre i più anziani, pensando di trovare un coetaneo, gli attribuiscono "anni di memoria" che in realtà non ha mai vissuto.

La mancata appartenenza all'uno o all'altro gruppo, così come l'assenza di un'età definita, lo fa vivere costantemente in una sorta di "confine". Come per il ritratto di Dorian Gray, la sua immagine esteriore è destinata a invecchiare, mentre il suo corpo matura biologicamente attraverso un costante dualismo, che rende però la sua vita decisamente unica.



roberto cuoghi +
smin linke
una fila seconda e quarta,
ultima fila: prima e seconda)

ROBERTO CUOGHI

COMUNICATO STAMPA

Gli ultimi lavori di Roberto Cuoghi sono esposti dal 29.09. al 30.10. presso la Galleria Massimo De Carlo, dal martedì al sabato, dalle 12 alle 19,30 in Viale Corsica 41 a Milano.

Cuoghi presenta sette quadri realizzati con una tecnica complessa e stratificata che utilizza svariati materiali (pennarelli, retini, china, pastelli, pantoni, spray, smalti, carboncino) su due supporti principali: il vetro e gli acetati.

La sovrapposizione dei materiali e dei supporti suggerisce un riferimento alla grande tradizione disegnativa e pittorica italiana, riletta in chiave contemporanea.

Gli strati di acetato e vetro nella loro trasparenza svolgono una funzione analoga a quella che, nella pittura, svolgono le velature ad olio. Come in una sorta di coltura in vitro i materiali, il disegno, fanno apparire i soggetti più tipici con diversi gradi di astrazione.

Questo modo di procedere, per sovrapposizione di campi, contribuisce a creare una sensazione di grande profondità e allo stesso tempo di leggerezza permettendo a Cuoghi, che lavora utilizzando superfici riflettenti, di far emergere mediante la sapiente combinazione di sagome di varia opacità e trasparenza, figure di grande chiarezza e di intensa pulizia formale.

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Roberto Cuoghi

ALISON M. GINGERAS

This page: Roberto Cuoghi as his father, Milan, 2000. Photo: James Gooding. Opposite page, top left: Roberto Cuoghi, *Untitled*, 2003, pen, charcoal on tracing paper, spray paint, enamel ink, marker, tissue paper, and acetate, 20 1/4 x 23 1/2". Right: Roberto Cuoghi, *Untitled*, 2003, pencil on tracing paper, enamel, spray paint, marker, chalk, and acrylic on acetate, 40 1/4 x 30 1/2". Bottom: Roberto Cuoghi, *Untitled*, 2005, laser-cut print, 22 x 20 1/2".

But you look so young!" might seem an incredibly rude thing to say—if said to a thirty-one-year-old. Yet upon meeting Roberto Cuoghi for the first time last February, this apparent faux pas was forgivable. After all, I was expecting to meet the artist who, as a student at Milan's Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in 1993, decided that he would "become" his father. During the next seven years, Cuoghi embarked on a radical quest to accelerate his age, assuming the elderly man's physical appearance, mannerisms, and dress. His weight swelled to 308 pounds, he grew a beard, dyed his hair grey, and developed chronic hags under his eyes, not to mention attendant health problems. Without the help of make-up or Orlan-esque surgical intervention, Cuoghi—to borrow a term from queer discourse—convincingly "passed" as a man in his mid-sixties. (Only very recently has he begun to reverse

this aging process; hence my surprise at his "younger" look.) When stopping for breakfast in a Milanese café or running errands in local shops, he received the kind of *cortesía* reserved for a grandparent. His actions amounted to a strange retelling of *Oedipus Rex*. Instead of killing his father, Cuoghi appropriated his identity.

The artist's refusal to frame his undertaking as a work of art is as provocative as his willingness to abandon his youth. Established paradigms, as the artist asserts, undermine the full extent of his endeavor: "Performance" insinuates too many theatrical associations. "Body art" is far too narrow; it excludes the psychological and sociological dimensions of Cuoghi's metamorphosis. The dated term "living sculpture" is too fetishistic; Cuoghi never put himself on a Gilbert & George-style pedestal. In the absence of a preexisting category to define this episode of his life (and work), then, the artist characterizes it as a "transformation." It might even be said that "transformation" is Cuoghi's preferred medium. While his eclectic practice involves digital animation, comic-book illustration, drawing, painting, photography, and text, Cuoghi's primary activity is the alteration of the experiences, representations, and expectations of daily life. Accordingly, disregarding the art world's current taste for all things performative, Cuoghi never produced any commodifiable relics or exhibitable documentation of his experience, save a few snapshots.

Yet unlike current biennial darlings Tino Sehgal and Superflex, Cuoghi's refusal to produce material artifacts has nothing to do with challenging the art economy or institutional systems. His reasoning is much more specific; this resistance is not a general, driving principle of his oeuvre or about staking out an ideological position. The process of becoming his father involved such extreme adjustments to both his psychic and physique that merely recording these complex changes through visual or textual modes would ultimately have been reductive. In this way, Cuoghi extends the legacy of '70s artists who assumed alternative identities, like Eleanor Antin, Lynn Herschman, Casey Fanni Tutti, and Adrian Piper. His "transformation" was not done for a specific audience or to prove a single point (about age, gender, class, or race). Only by living with Cuoghi during the seven years could one grasp the full extent of his radical metamorphosis. Rumors and anecdotes—as opposed to photographs and relics—are almost all that remain from his identity switch.

In this ongoing series, writers are invited to introduce the work of artists at the beginning of their careers.

Before fully articulating his notion of transformation, Cuoghi's earliest works often took the form of "endurance pieces," which involved more temporary conditions. One such work, 1997's *Il coccodrileista*—a nonsensical term that rhymes with "cubista" or "futurista"—entailed his wearing a pair of goggles that severely distorted his vision for five consecutive days. Replacing the normal lenses with Pechan prisms—an optical device used to invert and reverse images—Cuoghi was barely able to walk, let alone function normally. To "record" the effects of his self-imposed handicap, he drew a series of self-portraits and wrote anecdotal poems in an Antonin Artaud-like scrawl. Cuoghi's taste for reality-shifting experimentation might claim its paternity in the activities of Raymond Hains and Jacques de la Villeglé. In the early 1950s, this Nouveaux Réalistes duo began making photographs, films, and text pieces by replacing either the camera lens (*Hypnoscopes*, 1952) or their own spectacles (*Lunettes en verre cannelé*, 1957) with ribbed glass. Like Hains and Villeglé, Cuoghi seeks to deform his experience of reality as well as disturb the mimetic representation of the "real." Cuoghi seems to incarnate Hains's revolutionary declaration: "Artists are leaving the creation of art to become abstractions personified."

The Goodgriefies, 2000, a five-minute film, relocates the notion of "personified abstraction" from the artist's own body to the cartoon world. In an animated version of *cadavre exquis*, Cuoghi dissected, shuffled, and recombined characters from *Peanuts*, *Scooby-Doo*, *South Park*, *Popeye*, *The Simpsons*, *The*



The process of becoming his father involved such extreme adjustments to both Cuoghi's psyche and physique that recording these changes through visual or textual modes would have been reductive

Smurfs, and *The Flintstones* to create a cast of disturbing hybrids. Synched to a catchy jazz sound track, Cuoghi's creatures at first humorously parade across the screen as if to flaunt their aberrance. Quickly progressing from the innocuous to the horrific, the film crescendos as Cuoghi's animated monstrosities begin to decay—they fart, belch, bleed, piss themselves, and decompose. The moral: Not all transformative experiments have happy endings.

Even when his work takes a form that is less narrative driven, Cuoghi's quest for other realities prevails. For his first solo exhibition at Galleria Massimo de Carlo in 2003, Cuoghi invented an unusual pictorial technique to make a series of exquisite drawings. Combining pencil, ink, charcoal, pastel, marker, spray paint, and varnish, each of Cuoghi's chiaroscuro drawings "emerge" from the layering of numerous semitransparent sheets of acetate and tracing paper that are framed behind glass. Fragments of an image progressively build up to form a whole. The interplay of opaque and transparent materials produces an eerie optical effect, imitating the spectral qualities of a daguerrotype.

Paradoxically, Cuoghi applied his fetishistic method to the most generic subjects, such as an old-fashioned record player and a tree trunk. Two untitled portraits featured in the show depict an older man and woman. Despite the incredible amount of detail, it is impossible to decipher anything about the identity of either

sitter or about the era in which they live. While the medium of drawing might seem disconnected from the rest of his practice, there is a metaphorical connection between Cuoghi's real-life transformation and the peculiar visual effects produced by his drawing technique. His unique layering process transforms the depicted object or person by stripping the subject of its individual attributes while simultaneously giving it an auratic glow. The preciousness of Cuoghi's technique lends the subject a presence that is both haunting and somewhat unsettling. If Cuoghi realized he could not visually represent his own transformation, he found a means to metaphorically suggest its force through his drawings.

Just like with his art, Cuoghi's personal transformation is ongoing. His most recent self-portrait, *Untitled*, 2005, takes the form of a 3-D image—made using a technique called lenticular imaging. Displayed on the door of the Wrong Gallery in New York City this past March, the work still portrays Cuoghi as an old man. His portly face, seen in relief, is composed of an Arcimboldo-like assemblage of toys, dolls, and techotches. For Cuoghi, his American debut was an opportunity to formally say goodbye to his old self. "What are you going to do now?" I asked him. "Surely you can't go back to who you were before." "No, you're right," he deadpanned. "I'm transforming into something else: a young, international artist." □

Alison M. Gingeras is an independent curator living in Paris and New York.

art

Nr. 4 / April 2006

Deutschland: 7,80

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Österreich: 8,50

BeNeLux: 9,00

DAS KUNSTMAGAZIN

4 190108 407804 04



Berlin-Biennale

bb4: Das große Kunstfest in der Auguststraße

Debatte: Hat die Kunstkritik noch eine Zukunft?

ROBERTO CUOGHI lässt sich so schnell in keine künstlerische Schublade stecken. Mal malt der 32-jährige Italiener, der in Mailand lebt, Comic-Figuren, die an „Charlie Brown“ und die „Simpsons“ erinnern, oder dreht psychedelische Video-Cartoons. Dann entwirft er aus Tinte, Sprühfarbe, Transparentpapier und Pappe seltsame Männerporträts. Auf der Berlin-Biennale zeigt er eine Serie neuer „Zeichnungen“, die er in einer selbst entwickelten Technik mit Säure auf schwarzes Glas ätzt. Erst unter speziellem Licht offenbaren sie ihr gespenstisches Universum aus Monstern und Teufeln.

Video-Still aus „The Goodgriefies“ („Die Guttrauerer“, 2000)



self service

BEGGING



ISSUE N°24 SPRING/SUMMER 2006 20€

OVER EXPOSED

CURATED BY STEPHANIE MOISDON

This is not a catalog of pictures, nor a list of names, even less a textbook for trends. It is my choice, unique and solitary in its assertion. An exhibition occupying the space of a magazine, destined for more intimate readings. A major figure devoid of any authoritarianism, whose structurally irreverent works elude all scholarly discourse, John Armleder did not choose painting. For the past forty years, he has puzzled artistic conventions and categories, opening space for a new form of critical thought. A thought that is nothing less than the venom of liberty and which is omnipresent in the works of a new generation of artists: artists such as Amy O'Neill, who exploits American idiosyncrasies, recreates situations and objects from local folklores to reveal their triviality and their disturbing strangeness. Or Trisha Donnelly, for whom art is less the production of forms than ghostly tales. Take a good look at the ancestral image of this old woman before she disappears. Obliterating matter and face in the heart of cosmic landscapes, Vidya Gastaldon is perpetually in search of the horizon line between earth and sky, nature and mind. Roberto Cuoghi's sleeping moments engender contemporary monsters and chimeras. Where did I see this drawing? Probably a self-portrait, it reminds me of our first meeting, when the very young Italian artist portrayed himself as his own father, a simple and quiet old man, weighed down by age and traditions. Let us move towards other dumbfounded monsters by Cameron Jamie, reminders that hell is not far. Those paper creations summon up the demons of his childhood, which he tortures with a certain black humor. Heads are distorted and caricatured — human heads on animal bodies with guts spilling out in exulting compositions where pastel and gouache, collage and automatic writing mingle. Young Kelley Walker, whose pictures burst with sex appeal are reflective, post-Warholian. They are based on that tense dialogue between distress and seduction, picking up existing images, but never appropriating them; he does not like that word, and neither do we! A discourse on the object and consumerism from which Haim Steinbach learned a few brilliantly formal and conceptual lessons a long time ago. The master of display, he is an insolent master who fires everything back. History will have to choose and remember only a few. I, for one, will remember the first hyperrealist paintings of Franz Gertsch, monumentalized group portraits, and slow explorations of what reality engenders in painting, off-camera: a question of reality that haunts contemporary thinking and intersects with the history of pictures and photography. The man leaning over his desk, backwards, will soon die. Christopher Williams composed his first piece with photographs of John F. Kennedy on May 10, 1963. This inaugural work is already full of the essence of Williams's remarkable work: how we view an image, its truth and its beauty. It is no coincidence that today he collaborates with the duo Jeroen de Rijke and Willem de Rooij. Their latest film, *Mandarin Ducks*, portrays a dying and grotesque bourgeoisie. It is indefinable, way beyond the border of fiction and documentary. Beauty, hidden or revealed, can also be deadly, as is clear at the end of the long and melancholy stroll through Philippe Garrel's *Les Amants Réguliers*; angel faces are reflected in the faraway minds of Pierre Clémenti and Nico. Guido Crepax was not considered as an artist, yet his dark words left their mark on our childhoods. Not only was he a great draughtsman of the erotic, a sophisticated lover of Sade and women's arses, but also the passionate architect of the lines and the bodies of pleasure.

Opposite page: *Jeroen de Rijke and Willem de Rooij Cas Enklaar in Mandarin Ducks*
2005, photography: Thomas Manneke, courtesy of Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Köln



Roberto Cuoghi *Untitled (Lady Godzilla)*
2004, chalk with tea, enamel, spray, felt-tip pens, pantone and acrylic on acetate, 50 x 35 cm
courtesy of Galleria Massimo De Carlo

contemporary

212121



special issue on drawing

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no 83
2006

ROBERTO CUOGHI

MILOVAN FARRONATO



Above: *Litified*, 2006. Opposite: *Il Coccodrista* (detail), 1997. All images courtesy: Galleria Massimo De Carlo, Milan.

ROBERTO Cuoghi prefers not to conclude with a final scene; he would rather preserve the intervening moments in order to reach a conclusion that is uncertain and open to further developments. The end is less important than the steps that lead to it. Cuoghi's drawings, then, have less the character of a finished work than of a manuscript, with its creative pangs, its playing with variations, its interpolations. What counts is not the arriving point, but the self-imposed gestation with its pains and labour – the visions, the steps and the dissatisfaction of the initial image that generates the next one.

From his early drawing series, *Il Coccodrista* (1997), to his recent paintings exhibited at the 2006 Berlin Biennale, Cuoghi has shown a consistent interest in transparent surfaces, which range from tracing paper over acetate sheets to glass. Transparency gives him the opportunity to explore the image on the reverse and to continue developing it from a different viewpoint. Following his first experiments with overlap, he decided to complicate the process by adding further transparent layers, which at any moment can transform the work from a drawing into a painting. Using both traditional and unorthodox materials, Cuoghi ranges from paint to markers, from ink to pastels, from greasy and oily materials to emulsions. Consequently, the image is not fixed in its iconography and has no monolithic presence, but remains

continuously in a state of change, both for the artist and for the viewer who becomes absorbed in its variations and half-lights, which may be enhanced according to the viewpoint (recent works are lit up by a halogen light).

At the same time it is possible to talk both of a synchronic register (related to vision) and a diachronic one (related to writing). Paradoxically, writing in this case is destined to vanish or mix up with something else. The mind changes dress all the time and the soul expresses itself in an even more confused way. On various pages Cuoghi writes a narrative that turns into a discourse or dialogue. But if it is true that 'verba volant, scripta manent' (words fly, writing remains), it is also the case that ancient sages often didn't bother to write down their teachings, instead relying on the effect of words spoken openly to affect the interlocutor in a particular way. They knew that the spirit can animate, whereas a letter can kill. Similarly, every work by Cuoghi – be it a sound installation (*Mbube*, 2005) or a video broadcast by a national television channel (*The foolish thing*, 2002) – finds its conclusion in the viewer.

Cuoghi also has a tendency to invert the order of things (in *Il Coccodrista* he looked at himself and the surrounding world through Pechan prisms), altering the course of time (when he was 25 he decided to take on the features of a middle-aged man) and multiplying points of view. The first time I encountered







*Above: *Il Coccardista* (detail), 1997. Opposite: *Unfired*, 2003.*

The image is not fixed in its iconography and has no monolithic presence, but remains continuously in a state of change

his work. I assumed his chameleonic skill represented a desire to become someone other than himself. In fact, Cuoghi doesn't play roles because a role is something temporary. Instead he lives them, in order to savour perceptions, to elaborate and valorise certain experiences and to take unfulfilled potentials to completion. Perhaps by devising an *escamotage* (conjuring trick), he deliberately overturns situations to produce a change of perspective (his own and others'). But these reversals cannot be directed entirely at ourselves, since this would annihilate our previous existence; an individual part can be transformed to become integrated into our history, but something always remains. We consist mainly of our memories; but may allow us to revisit the past only to project us back into the present and then back to the future. This is what Roberto Cuoghi does and will always do. If, as a young man, he decided to appear and live as a 50-year-old, now that he has turned 30 he seems ready to come back to the present; a present, however, lived after experience of the future.

It is difficult to formulate an ending for a text that explores the different shifts offered by Cuoghi's biography and poetics in the attempt to establish an instable image. Maybe it would be more appropriate to close it with ellipsis...

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