

TONY FIORENTINO

Portfolio

2009-2013



Cleaning a lamp for street lighting, 2010, action, b/w polaroid

It is difficult to contextualize Tony Fiorentino's work: sculpture, photography, art installation and performance. No one of these categories is adequate by itself to describe his work as an artist. At this stage of his career, it seems as if he has not yet been tied to a particular genre. Therefore, we shouldn't be surprised if his direction is that of the incessant experimentation, which finds its reason for being in a continuous mutation of forms, techniques and disciplines. The spectrum of Tony's artistic interests is quite vast and is reflected in the use and choice of continuously varying materials including, but not limited to, glass and wood.

An attentive look will interpret Tony Fiorentino's collection of works as a multifaceted research on reality and art itself. This is what emerges particularly from his most recent production, from *Mare* to *Dominium Melancholiae*, two polished and incisive references to Arte Povera and Albrecht Durer. It seems like certain individual experiences of everyday life become part of a complex artistic performance themselves, where Tony Fiorentino always plays the dual role of author and witness. This is the case for works like *Telling a secret to an unknown person* and *Contact*, or works with an evident social and political value like *Follows unknown blind man* and *Remove the Bricks from the Street is Sign of Revolution*. The true action itself combines the photographic or video documentation in all the works. This stratification and mixture of experiences and disciplines is possibly the most typical trait of his artistic activity; an affirmation that continues to be fulfilled and reinvent itself in forms that are increasingly aware, mature and refined. It is an art of concept and speculation to which a special care for the aesthetic aspect is added, never leaving itself up to fate.

Vittorio Parisi



Dominium Melancholiae

2013

Iron, glass, zinc, lead acetate, water

160 x 51 x 51 cm each

Courtesy of the artist

View of the exhibition *Dominium Melancholiae*, Spazio Salenbauch, Venice.

Tony Fiorentino explores the concept of melancholy with maturity and courage, facing the heavy cultural and speculative heritage that the theme carries with itself. *Dominium Melancholiae* handles an artistic and philosophical tradition that goes from antiquity to psychoanalysis, from Dürer to Lars von Trier. Tony's polished and surprising reflection begins with Albrecht Dürer's *Melancholia I*, an engraving made in 1514, perhaps the most famous modern representation of melancholy. The artist was inspired by the particular detail on the top left section of the engraving where a sea horizon, dominated by the light of a comet, is opened, in which an half-submerged city arises. Tony reasons around the remote and striking hypothesis that the city in question is Venice. In the engraving, the comet comes from Saturn and Erwin Panofsky, who studied melancholy at length, reminds us that Saturn depended on tides and floods. The melancholic was he who received the gift of the presage of catastrophes. Tony's intervention doesn't seek to add something to the theoretical discourse, but to its representative manner. *Dominium Melancholiae* involves art and chemistry, sculpture and performance, tradition and experimentation. Through the immersion of a metal zinc sheet in distilled water, mixed with lead acetate - a metal that is always associated with Saturn- it produces the so-called *Tree of Saturn*. This chemical vegetation characterized by unpredictable and delicate ramifications is already noted by alchemists. The color of the sculpture, contained in a glass ampoule, drifts to black: referenced to the "atrabile", the black bile, one of the four moods of the body assumed by Hippocrates. The Greek word *melancholia* derives from the association of two words μέλας, "black" and χολή "bile", "black humor". *Dominium Melancholiae* is an artistic experiment characterized by a strong conceptual value and a deep knowledge of the artistic and Western philosophical tradition: the ampoules watch over the Venetian alley, waiting for the next sea storm.



Dominium Melancholiae, details.



Untitled

2013

Candles

Courtesy of the artist

View of the exhibition *A first step towards coincidences & meetings Part V*

B-A-D temporaneo, Pietrasanta



Hang Piece/No Action

2013

There is a place, Snowden street, that is an street but you cannot stay there, you cannot no-walk, you can just cross it (a commisioned work for Salon Flux London, in collaboration with Rafa Prada).

This action was inspired in the research of Henrietta Williams and George Gingell, published in "critical cities. Ideas knowledge and agitation from emergin urbanists. Vol. 3", Ed. Myrdle Court Press, 2012.



Mare

2013

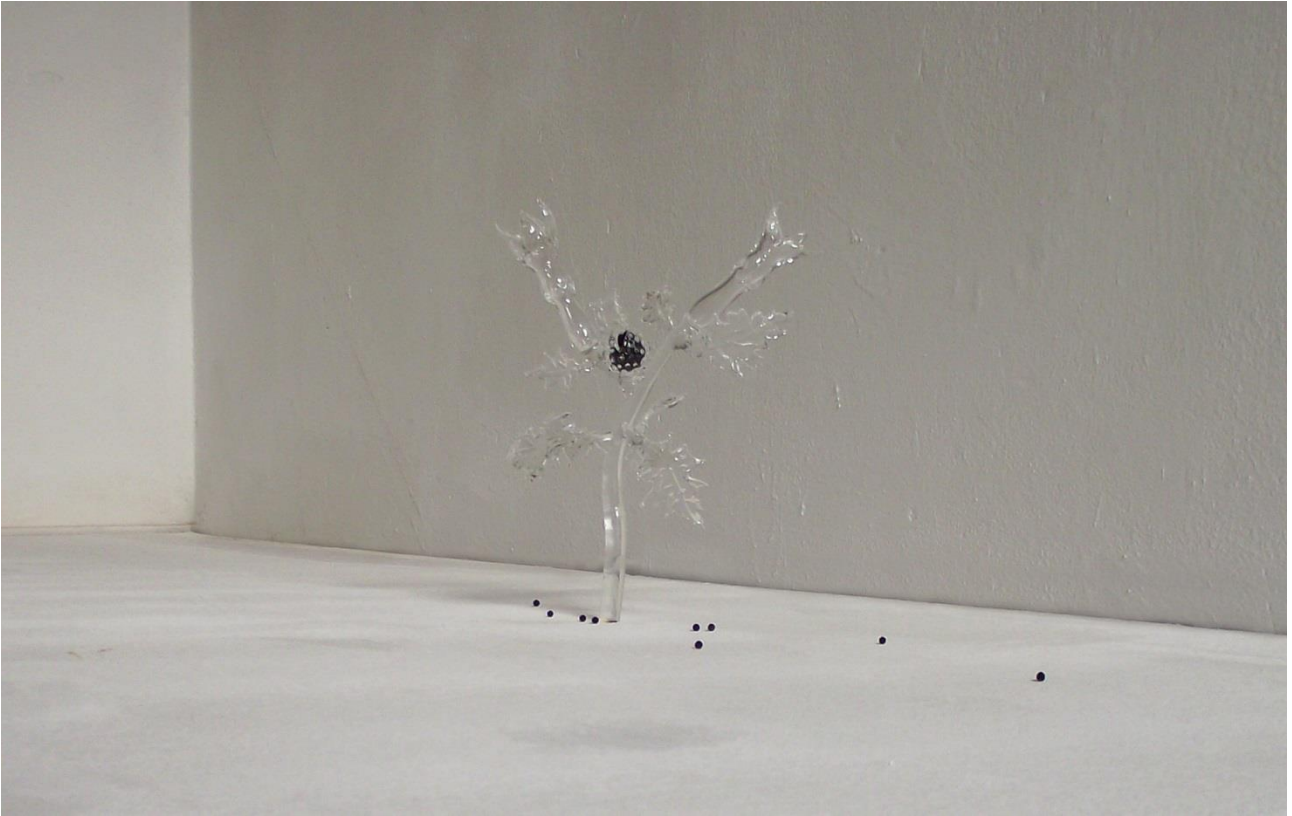
Wood

Dimensions variable

View of the installation CCDS, Ritmo, Catania

Courtesy of the artist

The audience is asked to create a composition, depicting the sea, with some pieces boats recovered from immigrants who arrived in Pantelleria, off the coast of North Africa. The work assumes a collective dimension without ever having, however, a definitive form.



Stramonium

2013

Blown glass and seeds of Datura Stramonium

27 x 20,8 x 4,5 cm

Courtesy of the artist



Box for Standing

2012

Wood, iron, lock and personal object

Courtesy of the artist

A wooden box closed with a lock, which is the size of the artist's body and contains his personal belongings, is placed in the public space for a whole day.



Do You Remember This?

2012

Marble

21 x 1,5 x 2 cm

Courtesy of the artist



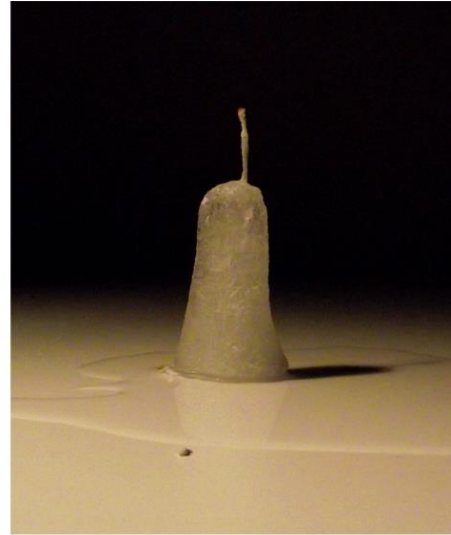
Untitled

2012

Sack and candles

Courtesy of the artist

In an investigation into how and why man loaded with meaning deals and objectifies, Fiorentino is drawn to the most private daily rituals. In a recent work, he visited churches in a city having to deliver rocks where used votive candles are harvested in order to recycle them to make new ones. The artist therefore exposes one, filled to the brim. The timeless mystique of thoughts, hopes and prayers, in which the act of lighting a candle is itself exhausted and does not need further care, but rather a renewal, is interrupted by the artist in order to seal the ghost of the original prayer. Here Fiorentino denies the belief of reject logic, changing course of the eschatology of matter.



Untitled

2012-2013

DVD-PAL

Courtesy of the artist

Untitled is a candle where the wax is replaced by ice. The object slowly disappears leaving the sign of an unburnt wick. In the experiment, there is a glimpse of Fiorentino's experiential interest of the ambiguity of the common object. The many uses of the candle, its various possibilities, are denied or distorted here, the fire is replaced by the environment. In *Candle*, the canonicity of the object bends on different occurrences posing questions regarding the boundaries of its signification.



Les Phares

Rubens, fleuve d'oubli, jardin de la paresse,
Oreiller de chair fraîche où l'on ne peut aimer,
Mais où la vie afflue et s'agite sans cesse,
Comme l'air dans le ciel et la mer dans la mer;
Léonard de Vinci, miroir profond et sombre,
Où des anges charmants, avec un doux souris
Tout chargé de mystère, apparaissent à l'ombre
Des glaciers et des pins qui ferment leur pays;
Rembrandt, triste hôpital tout rempli de murmures,
Et d'un grand crucifix décoré seulement,
Où la prière en pleurs s'exhale des ordures,
Et d'un rayon d'hiver traversé brusquement;
Michel-Ange, lieu vague où l'on voit des Hercules
Se mêler à des Christs, et se lever tout droits
Des fantômes puissants qui dans les crépuscules
Déchirent leur suaire en étirant leurs doigts;
Colères de boxeur, impudences de faune,
Toi qui sus ramasser la beauté des goujats,
Grand coeur gonflé d'orgueil, homme débile et jaune,
Puget, mélancolique empereur des forçats;
Watteau, ce carnaval où bien des coeurs illustres,
Comme des papillons, errent en flamboyant,
Décors frais et légers éclairés par des lustres
Qui versent la folie à ce bal tournoyant;
Goya, cauchemar plein de choses inconnues,
De foetus qu'on fait cuire au milieu des sabbats,
De vieilles au miroir et d'enfants toutes nues,
Pour tenter les démons ajustant bien leurs bas;
Delacroix, lac de sang hanté des mauvais anges,
Ombragé par un bois de sapins toujours vert,
Où, sous un ciel chagrin, des fanfares étranges
Passent, comme un soupir étouffé de Weber;
Ces malédictions, ces blasphèmes, ces plaintes,
Ces extases, ces cris, ces pleurs, ces Te Deum,
Sont un écho redit par mille labyrinthes;
C'est pour les coeurs mortels un divin opium!
C'est un cri répété par mille sentinelles,
Un ordre renvoyé par mille porte-voix;
C'est un phare allumé sur mille citadelles,
Un appel de chasseurs perdus dans les grands bois!
Car c'est vraiment, Seigneur, le meilleur témoignage
Que nous puissions donner de notre dignité
Que cet ardent sanglot qui roule d'âge en âge
Et vient mourir au bord de votre éternité!

Charles Baudelaire



Cleaning a Lamp For Street Lighting

DVD-PAL

2012

Camera: Esteban Humet Fuentes

Reader: Maeva Deleersnyder

Installation at *Sotto la strada, la spiaggia*

Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin

Courtesy of the artist

Inspired by Charles Baudelaire's *The Beacon*, in which the poet deconstructs the styles of famous visual artist through his lyrical verses, only to conclude with a praise of their brilliance as beacons of light, Fiorentino chose one city lamppost to clean, so that it would emit a stronger light than the others. Combining the poetic nature of its inspiration with an active approach much closer to artistic strands of the Situationist movement, *Cleaning a Lamp for Street Lighting (infinite action)* contemporizes the Romantic idea of artist as genius by bringing the artistic gesture to a worldly action. Instead of seeing artists as illuminators of imagination, here the artist is physically changing a quotidian place by wiping off the neglected dirt that impedes good visibility.



Concetto di auto fruizione di un'opera

2012

Oil painting

30 x 30 cm

Courtesy of the artist

The relativity of the fruition of a work of art inspired Fiorentino to experiment extreme modalities and the limit of contradiction. In *Concetto di auto fruizione di un'opera*, he paints a picture only for himself which he then hastens to delete. The utopian reference to a self-referring art consumes itself in the restitution of a lost image to the public, the only documentary value.





Try an im/possible connection

2009-2012

b/w photograph

Courtesy of the artist

Try an im/possible connection, photographic project started in 2009, stems from a fascination with pristine places and a reflection on the relationship between man and nature. In a repeated and ongoing attempt to establish a link with this one sees, or reveals, the body's attempt to emulate the forms.

A camouflage, plausible or misleading, results in attempt to reestablish a connection with the environment, through a mimesis that does not deny carnality: it is the body itself that becomes nature, becoming its graft or extension.

"... And here better / I recognized myself/ A docile fiber / Of the universe ...", an alien appendix that wants to be accepted, trying to reconcile with the whole, in a fusion of Ungarettian memory.



Follows unknown blind man

2011

Action

B/w photograph 10 x15 cm

Courtesy of the artist

The stranger is one of the main themes of Fiorentino's research. *Follows unknown blind man* documents a motion that the artist completed in London in 2011. The 4 photographs portray a blind person: a subject unaware of the project. After once meeting on the street, Fiorentino decided to follow him sharing 2 hours and 27 minutes of his daily life. This work can be read as a metaphor for the human need to venture toward the unpredictability of the unknown motivated by something impersonal and alien. The blind man is the idea, sightlessness is every road traveled without a will.



Kontakt

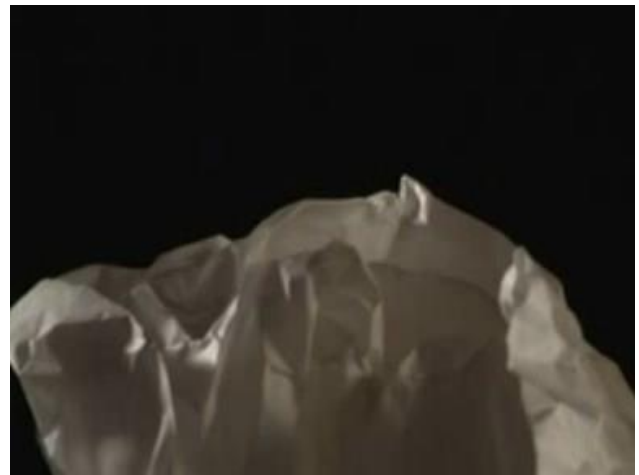
Action

2010, Amsterdam

Colour Photograph 8 x 6 cm

Courtesy of the artist

One can read Fiorentino's work as an assiduous attempt to test the ideal with reality through bridges with symbolic dimensions. In *Kontakt*, the action is dedicated to extraneousness. Here the performance is the creation of a situation that allows an encounter between strangers. Fiorentino binds his bicycle to another. After observing the reactions of the victims, returning to them, he unties the bicycle and apologizes pretending to be distracted. The conversation begins and the first contact occurs. In the following days the action is repeated but the "victims" are chosen according to a previous interest.



Untitled (Sculpture)

2010

DVD-PAL

02:59

Courtesy of the artist

Video made during the workshop with the artist Grzegorz Kowalski : *“Does the sculptor need a camera? Camera as a tool to study time-space”* .



Removed the Bricks From the Street is Sign of Revolution

2009

6 polaroid 10,2 x 10,2 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Removed Some Bricks From the street is a Sign of Revolution takes place in the streets of Greece. Fiorentino, a student in Athens at the time, took part in the 2008-2009 riots that broke out after the police killed a teenage boy. During the clashes between citizen and authorities, which gave rise to a wave of solidarity protests all over the world, protesters used everything within their reach as throwing weapons: bottles, eggs, stones, and even the bricks which composed the street. The same objects that make up the city are used to destroy it. The artist replicated the image of the torn streets, creating a sort of immediate Proust Madeleine moment for citizens that shows the all granting aptitudes of the city.

OTHER PERFORMANCE

Nel blu dipinto di blu

No photos available

2011

Performance (on the occasion of the inauguration "Officine dell'Arte" at Careof DOCVA, Milan, 13.12.11 > 11.02.2011)

Throughout the duration of the opening, I was tied to the seat of an airplane in flight, with the seat belt that was holding my arms and body leaving me within a limited range of motion.

The sensations experienced include nausea, headaches, anxiety, stomach pain and lack of air.

This action lasted two hours from 6pm to 8 pm.

The opening of the exhibition lasted from 6pm to 8 pm.

Telling a secret to an unknown person

No photos available

2010

Performance

While walking along the country roads I met an old man, I stopped, I told my secret, and I started walking. He was left in a shock of my strange behaviour.

Imagery

Performance (during the opening “Officine dell’Arte” at Careof DOCVA, Milan, 13.12.11 > 11.02.2011)

01. Sventrare una balena rosa
02. Accompagnare cani gialli
03. Giudicare un pelo ruvido
04. Incorniciare un armonia melanconica
05. Mantenere il mento rosso
06. Vedere un padre blu
07. Friggere un workshop verde
08. Coltivare un pane alto
09. Esercitare un pero basso
10. Trasformare un ballo crespo
11. Creare un oriente cattivo
12. Tagliare un foglio saporito
13. Formare un tavolo malinconico
14. Fermentare una scarpa triste
15. Ispirare un vaso allegro
16. Chiamare un cucchiaio bugiardo
17. Dipingere un ferro effimero
18. Assaggiare un quadro lento
19. Portare un cavalletto maleducato
20. Leggere a un esposizione Insolente
21. Bere un telefono poderoso
22. Registrare un massaggio maestoso
23. Ispirare un ritratto beffardo
24. Gridare a un piede rovinato
25. Pelare uno shampoo distrutto
26. Mentire a uno Spirito decadente
27. Regalare un sapone poetico

During the workshop with Italo Zuffi he asked us to express our work without any use of images, photos or videos. The exercise has allowed me to think about the strength of the evocative power of every single word and how it can automatically evoke a whole world of mental images to the listener. Verbal communication between people is mainly second-rational logical channels, the choice of words that we use is not 'random and pursues the aim of provoking certain impressions which are reworked in the listener iconically by the mind. The association between mental image and sound stimulus are 'so' immediate, which also occurs in the absence of an apparent logical order to the base and through this it opens up the field imaginativity. I created a series of sentences formed from a verb, a name and an adjective, connected together in an association of all free and casual, not looking for any purpose 'of meaning. The results are twenty-seven sentences in which words acquire a new status evocative thanks to the link that unites analogue. Each sentence becomes a short story, sketched a framework, capable of arousing images and feelings depends on your mental and perceptual elaboration and the baggage of previous experiences of each.

This phrase was shouted by someone during the opening of the “Officine dell’Arte” at Careof DOCVA, Milan.

Tony Fiorentino
Biography

*1987, born in Barletta, Italy.
Live and work in Milan and London.

Education

2006-2010 Accademy of Fine Art Carrara (IT)

Awards

2012 Talent Prize - Meta Energia

Solo exhibition

2013 *Dominium melancholiae*, Spazio Salenbauch, Galleria Doppelgaenger, Venice (IT)

2013 *Tony Fiorentino*, Palazzo Serbelloni, Galleria Doppelgaenger, Milan (IT)

Selected group exhibition

2014 *From & to*, Centre of Contemporary Art Villa Arson, Nizza (FR) (upcoming)

2014 *From & to*, Kunst Meran, Meran (IT) (upcoming)

2013 Daekyo Eye Level, Chungang University Seul Campus, Seul (KR) (upcoming)

2013 *Corso Aperto*, Fondazione Antonio Ratti, Como (IT)

2013 CCDS, B-A-D temporaneo, Pietrasanta (IT)

2013 *A first step towards coincidences & meetings Part V*, B-A-D temporaneo, Pietrasanta (IT)

2013 CCDS, Ritmo, Catania (IT)

2012 *Underneath the Street, the Beach*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (IT)

2012 *A first step towards coincidences & meetings Part II*, Indipendents3, Verona (IT)

2012 *A first step towards coincidences & meetings Part I*, SomethingLikeThis, Florence (IT)

2012 *Open House, reappropriation & possession*, Salon Flux, London (UK)

2011 *Officine dell'Arte*, Viafarini/Careof/Docva, Milan (IT)

2012 *Talent Prize*, Macro Pelanda Museum, Rome (IT)

2012 *Yicca Contest*, The Chemistry Gallery, Prague (CZ)

2011 *Una Mostra*, Ex Convento dei Domenicani, Ruvo di Puglia (IT)

2009 *Visuoni*, Festival di Arte e Musica Digitale, Andria (IT)

2009 *Makroart*- International chart project, Athens (GR)

2009 *Famoust Fantastic Caprices*, Anotati skoli Kalon Tecknon, Athens (GR)

2008 *Biennale di Carrara "Inferi"*, Accademy of Fine Art, Carrara (IT)

2008 *La Follia e la Pietra*, Ex ospedale psichiatrico di San Servolo, Venice (IT)

2008 *Oggettivamente*, Torano (IT)

Fellowships

2008-2009 Anotati Skoli Kalon Tecknon of Athens, Greece

Residence

2013-2014 Centre of Contemporary Art Villa Arson, Nizza (FR)

2013-2014 Kunst Meran, Meran (IT)

2013 CSAV-Artists Research Laboratory, Antonio Ratti Foundation, Como (IT)

2013 Daekyo Culture Foundation, Seoul (KR)

2013 CCDS – ControCarretta Della Speranza, Pantelleria (IT)

2012 Kunstfort bij Vijfhuizen, Vijfhuizen (NL)

Workshops

2012 *Order and Chance: The Unmaking of Time*, led by artist Sarah Sparkes, Tate Modern, London (UK)

2012 *The Apathy Complex*, by Richard Martin and Lucy Scholes, Tate Modern, London (UK)

2012 *Towards Tomorrow's Museum*, In collaboration with the Department of Culture, Media and Creative Industries, King's College London, Tate Modern, London (UK)

2012 *Tino Sehgal*, Tate Modern, London (UK)

2011 *Italo Zuffi*, Careof/ViaFarini/Docva, Milan, (IT)

2011 *Life Drawing Workshops*, by Anne Noble-Partridge and David Price, Tate Modern, London (UK)

2010 *"Does the sculptor need a camera? Camera as a tool to study time-space"* led by the artist Grzegorz Kowalski and filmmaker Lukasz Kosela, XIV Biennale di Carrara, (IT)

2010 *Predictions* by Martina Angelotti, Antonio Grulli and Emanuele Guidi, XIV Biennale di Carrara (IT)

Selected articles

Talenti Emergenti curated by Simone Frangi, Artribune Magazine 12, pag 79, 2013

Talent Zoom, curated by Paola Tognon, Exibart On Papar # 81, pag 56, 2012

Selected catalogue

Tony Fiorentino, *Dominium Melancholiae*, curated by Galleria Doppelgaenger, Sagraf srl, 2013

Underneath the Street, the Beach, curated by Stefano Collicelli Cagol and Michele Fiedler, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Foundation, Lectoris Publishing, pag 52-55, 2012

Talent Prize, catalogue of the exhibition, editing Inside Art, pag 74-75, 2012

Premio Meta Energia, Inside Art # 91, Novembre 2012, pag 23, 2012

SomeThingsLikeThis-STL art initiatives, Independents3, Art Verona, curated by Cristiano Seganfredo, Carlo Cambi Editore, pag 108, 2012

Yicca, Young International Contest of Contemporary Art, 2012

Officine dell'Arte, curated by Chiara Agnello and Milovan Farronato, from the workshop with Italo Zuffi and Stefano Arienti, Careof and Viafarini, Silvana Editoriale, 2011

Famous Fantastic Caprices, curated by Rafa Prada, pag 36, 2010

Makroart, curated by Rafa Prada, 2010

Curated exhibitions

<http://boomboomarte.blogspot.it/>

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