

Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Binahayat*

28 June – 5 October 2008

Private view: Saturday 28 June at Le Moulin

- From 6pm to midnight:
 - o 6pm: tour of the exhibition and cocktails
 - o 9pm–midnight: rustic banquet and DJ Set on the river bank

The *Binahayat* exhibition ('binahayat' means 'infinite' in Persian) at Le Moulin brings together a number of significant works by Michelangelo Pistoletto. Born in Biella, Italy in 1933, and a prominent exponent of Arte Povera and Conceptual Art, Pistoletto's development as an artist has been exceptional in many ways. His work on time, everyday life, form and the abstract is the corollary of a strong "humanistic" stance. For him, art is grounded in ethics.

At the Venice Biennale in 1968, Pistoletto presented his 'Manifesto of Collaboration'. This marked the establishment of 'Zoo', an open group which affirmed that art should be informed by creative exchange, that is to say the discovery of the identity of the other. In 2001 he founded the Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto and the University of Ideas in Biella, the goal of which is to "inspire and produce a responsible transformation of society through creative ideas and projects", bringing together his family, friends, artists and other figures in the art world, scientists, researchers and the curious... The microcosmic society of Cittadellarte and the imagination of Pistoletto gave rise to 'Love Difference', an "artistic movement for an inter-Mediterranean politic", which promotes collaboration between artists working throughout the Mediterranean basin. In this way, Pistoletto dwells on the phenomenon of globalization. The use of a Persian word – the ancient Persian empire, which is modern-day Iran, extended to the shores of the Mediterranean and is still a gateway to Eurasia – for the title of the exhibition signals the artist's attempt to establish a spatio-temporal meeting point between East and West.

Amongst the works on show at Le Moulin, Pistoletto's "fractal" mirrors occupy an important role. The mirror has been central to Pistoletto's art ever since his *Autoritratto oro* (*Gold Self-Portrait*, 1960), his first *Quadri specchianti* (*Mirror Paintings*) – the mirror/paintings dating to 1961–62 in which human figures and objects are painted onto reflecting surfaces – and through to his *Metrocubo d'infinito* (*Cubic Metre of Infinity*, 1966). The latter is a closed cube the six inner, mirror surfaces of which reflect to infinity. The reflecting effect inside the cube is not visible – the work can only be penetrated by means of imagination and mental exercise.

The mirror enables human beings to have a fundamental figurative experience: the act of looking at themselves. This is one of the symbols both of the phenomenology of the work and of the cognitive sciences. The reflecting material allows the artist to dwell upon the two-dimensionality of the picture, which becomes three-dimensional thanks to the impalpable depth of reflected background. To these dimensions the artist then adds a fourth one: that of time, which flows before the eyes of the viewer like a present continuous in a state of becoming linked to the notion of A-R-T or "artists run time".¹

In the 1970s Pistoletto began to cut his mirrors, to divide, multiply and recompose them in as many pictures. However, every small piece, every single part retains the power to capture the universe and to reflect it back. This metonymy applied to art, which is very close to Buddhist philosophy, acts as a visual maxim: the part contains the whole and vice versa. The *Fractal Black and Light* works on show at Le Moulin also represent the liberation of spiritual thought from the chains of figuration and the historical influence of the icon.

The mirror is also present in the installation *The Labyrinth*, which is characterized by the return of the mythological motif, the symbol of life, of knowledge, of the journey, the spiral of which perhaps suggests a cyclic vision of history. Here the labyrinth takes the form of an installation situated in the oldest part of the building (14th century). It is made from corrugated cardboard, traditionally regarded as a "poor" material.

Finally, another of Pistoletto's interventions involving the use of ordinary objects, in keeping with the goals of Cittadellarte, was to choose a symbol, *Segno Arte* (*Art Sign*), derived from the Vitruvian Man, a proportional study of a human body by Leonardo da Vinci. The symbol was then inflected in all the possible forms of everyday objects: tables, four-poster beds, windows, radiators, doors, etc.

Some of Michelangelo Pistoletto's historic works are on display in the *Binahayat* exhibition at Le Moulin.

¹ Hans Ulrich Obrist in *Speed and Slowness*, "Deimantas Narkevicius, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Jeff Preiss and Museum in Progress", Gli Ori, Prato and Galleria Continua, San Gimignano, 2003, p. 8.

Binahayat, from 28 June to 5 October at Le Moulin.

Le Moulin is open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 12 midday to 7pm.

GALLERIACONTINUA / Le Moulin 46 rue de la Ferté Gaucher 77169 Boissy-le-Châtel (France)

The journey from Paris, by car or train, takes about an hour.

- Saturday 28 June, free bus transport leaves Paris at 5pm from in front of the Théâtre de la Ville in Place du Châtelet. Subway: Châtelet and Hôtel de Ville, lines 1, 4, 7, 11, 14. Return to Paris at midnight. By prior booking only: lemoulin@galleriacontinua.com
- By car: A4 motorway eastwards in the direction of Metz/Nancy. Exit at junction 16 (Coulommiers), and take the N34. Drive through Coulommiers, and continue on towards Boissy-le-Châtel on the D222. Turn right onto the D66, and drive on until you get to Moulin de Boissy.
- Public transport: train service from Gare de l'Est to Coulommiers. From there, catch a bus for La Ferté Gaucher in front of the station, getting off at Moulin de Boissy / Chailly Boissy-le-Châtel.

To visit Le Moulin outside normal opening hours, write to: lemoulin@galleriacontinua.com

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