

Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

Diego BIANCHI

EL TRABAJO EN EXHIBICIÓN - THE WORK IN EXHIBITION

September 5 - October 17, 2015

Opening on September 5, 2015

Tuesday - Saturday, 11 am - 7 pm and by appointment

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Exchanging ideas with Diego Bianchi and Inès Katzenstein, an Argentine curator, and director of the Department of Art at the Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, in Buenos Aires, where she teaches with Diego Bianchi.

On 25 August 2015, 21:22, Diego Bianchi wrote:

Dear Inés,

How are you?

I arrived in Paris yesterday and am exhausted. Today I went to a giant warehouse in the country owned by the gallery to get materials for the exhibition. I had imagined some big shed with thousands of things scattered all over the place, but no, they were giant warehouses like Easy Home, full of very high shelving stocked with lots of wrapped packages. A wonderfully organized place with trolleys that in some enormous contraption they can take up to F8 or D7. There wasn't a bloody thing to hold onto, nothing at all. I finally bought some pieces of wood, some chairs, a computer and a chest of drawers, but everything was very clean, not at all tatty, or old, or misshapen, or weird, or formally attractive *pour moi*¹. Then I came across some other things in the street. Later on, I set about unpacking what I'd brought from Argentina: wood, wire, frames and some PC cards with putty. Meanwhile, with the help of an assistant I cut the wall that separates the gallery from the office. It was hard work but worth it because almost unintentionally I came across the (very saturated but tidy) workplace, which is quite different from the minimalist space of the exhibition room.

Although I've done that, I still feel I have to create at least a small circuit, so that certain actions are triggered when each visitor comes in.

What I do know so far is that those who work in the gallery are going to activate devices: they're going to move a light behind a panel, hold a frame, pull a lever, transport something on wheels, so they'll be the ones constructing the *fantasy*².

It's still an enigma as to what will happen inside the frames activated by the gallery staff. I began in BA with PC cards, mousse, things from inside machines and things, with the putty that I use at times, half misshapen and ugly. But I'd also like there to be something brighter, something not very visible, environmental and futile. I still don't know whether to veer the work to a surreal tone, ironically infantile, spellbound in some way by the devices, or whether on the other hand to get radical, wicked and conceptual and halt beforehand, letting the actions themselves be the focus. That's how things stand right now.

Love, Diego

¹ – in french in the text

² – in english in the text

On 26/8/2015, at 18:33, Ines Katzenstein wrote:

Dear Diego,

In a doctor's waiting room this morning I was reading Bifo Berardi while looking at the photos you sent and reading your email. I can't help connecting Bifo's ideas about the new cognitive regime presented by the new technologies and your work, which although it would at first seem to be so far-removed from the technological, started to appear to me to be intimately linked to the new technologies in two senses: on the one hand, because the very emphatic materiality you use in most of your works seems to be a synonym for resistance to immateriality, to flat, «plucked» surfaces, as Bifo says, to the digital. A kind of revenge of the dirty, the smelly and the irregular, in contrast to the translucent, clearly defined and colourless regime of computers. But on the other hand, for this new exhibition you seem to be obsessed with frames and supports, and I was wondering to what extent those frames are actually picture frames or screen frames, and to what extent the bodies or members that activate the visibility of things are treated as humans (with a human emotional nature) or as mere devices of visuality.

The lab test I had done today, which is why I sat in a waiting room for so long, is called a Hydrogen Test and involved me blowing into a tightly closed plastic bag every 20 minutes.

love,
Ines

On 27 August 2015, 10:49, Diego Bianchi wrote:

Good news about Berardi. A while back I read «The Transparency Society» by Byung Chul Han, which speaks about something similar and describes the digital as something that has no secret, a regime in which everything is there to see, where distance is lost, as are darkness, mystery and attraction (this is always referred to in relation to couples, isn't it?). But what you say about resistance to immateriality is very good, I'll buy it. At times I feel like a primitive being who has to use elementary means to draw some sort of conclusion from an origin he's unaware of.

As to the obsession with frames, yes, maybe. I think it's such an absurd but open convention, but one that is still valid: we still think that what happens inside a frame is something from another dimension that opens a true parenthesis, or is something that deserves protection.

As regards work and the gallery workers, I do try at times to relieve them from their office work for a while and give them an actual physical job, to show that in human work a sacrifice is always implicit. And I'm also keen to get the act of showing highlighted, underlining the miraculous instant in which something relives by being shown and observed each time.

The image of blowing into a plastic bag is also useful!! Thanks!
Diego

On 27/8/2015, at 17:09, Ines Katzenstein wrote:

Berardi says that digital signs are «cleansed of all sedimentation of carnality», something that echoes a lot, like the reverse direction in your work, which by the way I don't see as "reactive" in a conservative sense, in the sense of a desire to «return» to an ideal, healthier state, but as a kind of perceptive challenge on the one hand, and a sort of investigation into a rudimentary aesthetic of survival on the other, which could be located in the present or in the future indistinctly.

The amazing thing about Berardi is his moral pessimism. He says: «Mutation implies pathologies, sufferings, communication, unrest and poverty of existence. The nervous system is submitted to unprecedented stress, and this triggers pathologies of attention, of the imagination, of the memory and of the emotions, which tend to take on an epidemic character. Psychopharmacology intervenes to reestablish the productive and communication cycle when it is endangered by a psychopathic derailment.»

You still owe me an answer about to what point your frames are or are not screens. The question has to do with a picture of an ATM screen with an image inside that you sent and I didn't understand.

Love,
Inés



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On 27 August 2015, 21:18, Diego Bianchi wrote:

A perceptive and aesthetic challenge and rudimentary technology, yes: I reckon the unpleasant has to be present. As regards the temporal location of my work, I stand between the past and the present, or in the past of the present. I feel that I want to stretch the past forwards.

I loved the bit about the Berardi's moral pessimism! It always seems we have more information, more communication, more speed, more pleasure but no, the opposite's the case.

I took the picture I sent you in the street. Someone was repairing or doing something in the ATM from behind the screen. It was really strange to see skin and hands operating the insides of a computer. It reminded me of the 80s when you went bowling and could see the little feet and hands of the guy picking up the bowls.

love
d

On 28 August 2015, 13:33, Ines Katzenstein wrote:

What effect has working in Paris had on you?

On 30 August 2015, 19:43, Diego Bianchi wrote:

What most influences me about my situation in Paris are the people in the gallery, and working among them, cutting their walls, moving them around, creating a specific form of circulation in the room. Conditioning their daily work and conditioning mine, mutually having to adapt, thanks to a kind of pact of trust in art. I like the design of the small compartments in the gallery (and in the houses too). Everything's very compressed and used to the maximum, while to the contrary I find the exhibition spaces that leave a lot of space around the works quite surprising. So I'm busy building a bridge between the two situations.

A few months ago the gallery asked me about the characteristics of the assistant I'd need for the exhibition, and I explained that I always adapted to my assistants and to what they know how to do. The assistant I have is a young Czech artist; we get along fine, he's very patient and tidy, so we're getting there little by little.

love,
d.

On 31 August 2015, 1:50, Ines Katzenstein wrote:

Dear Diego, I'm about to leave for the airport. I'm going to the Istanbul Biennial and I want to leave you with something to think about as I fly. If it's true that the Argentine crisis of 2001 was the driving force behind a large part of your aesthetic – of the precarious, of the dysfunctional - what do you believe sustains that aesthetic 15 years later? How has it changed? How do you feel that the social and economic context influences your work today?

Hugs,
Inés

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On 31 August 2015, 11:44, Diego Bianchi wrote:

I'm not sure that the 2001 crisis was the driving force behind my aesthetic. What I do know is that at the time there was a coincidence of things both social, economic and even personal, that converged at that point.

After years of work, some things started improving in the way I created them. No doubt the lessons have sunk in, because I try not to make a stylistic seal of precariousness. But in contrast I am interested in the urgency and spontaneity of solutions. Here when faced with each new work I always feel there's something technical that I don't know how to solve and as I don't work with technicians, the solution to the problem is always dictated by the problem itself.

Anyway for me to do a sculpture is like taking a photo, in the sense that there's something fleeting, something volatile that I try to capture; an instant of unstable harmony. With this idea, you can see that too much structure and projection work against what interests me.

As for the context: I'm always interested in what is very present, what is common, what abounds; they're not necessarily things that I like personally but rather the contrary. I feel a sort of responsibility for the things there are in the world.

love
d

On 31 August 2015, 18:29, Ines Katzenstein wrote:

So I understand that you're interested in the ultra present, in art in its most radical documentary bias. What does the word urgency mean to you? And in this connection, do you think that art, in its highest conception, has an impact on consciences?

On 31 August 2015, 18:40, Diego Bianchi wrote:

Of course I believe that art has an impact on consciences because it can subvert the given order... how odd you should ask me that!

I find the documentary bias interesting but always with surrealistic fantasies. With the word urgency, I refer to that part of the present that can't wait because it's fading away, that which is in danger of becoming extinct because it doesn't have visibility; or on the contrary, something which has become so, so normal that it becomes invisible.

On 2 September 2015, 2:08, Ines Katzenstein wrote:

Thanks, Diego. I think with this we're now equipped to see the exhibition. I arrive in Paris tomorrow and will go straight there.

Love,
Inés