

From June 9th to July 25th 2010 GAMeC – Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo will host in its SpazioZero the exhibition *The Crystal Hypothesis*, curated by Yoann Gourmel and Élodie Royer, winners of the 5th Edition of the Premio Lorenzo Bonaldi per l'Arte – EnterPrize.

Proposed by Florence Derieux (Director FRAC Champagne-Ardenne), Yoann Gourmel and Élodie Royer were chosen in June 2009 by an international panel composed of Iwona Blazwick (Director Whitechapel Gallery, London), Rein Wolfs (Artistic Director Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel) and Giacinto Di Pietrantonio (Director GAMeC, Bergamo).

THE PRIZE

The prize was presented for the first time in 2003 by GAMeC with the support of the Bonaldi family as a result of the family's wish to commemorate Lorenzo Bonaldi's passion for art and collecting. The prize is the only one of its kind: its aim is to search out talented curators under the age of 30 and to mount the winner's proposed exhibition. The purpose of the prize is to draw attention to the importance of the curator in the international art field and to encourage and support the talent of a young curator at an extremely dynamic moment of his or her professional career.

The idea behind this prize was to create not a competitive situation, but an opportunity for professional growth and comparison. This is why, in 2005, the idea arose to accompany the award ceremony with a biennial convention, Qui Enter Atlas – International Symposium of Emerging Curators.

THE PROJECT

The project of Yoann Gourmel and Élodie Royer brings together works by ten contemporary artists who deal with various aspects and ways of seeing in order to evoke – sometimes in an anachronistic manner – the way we look at things today, the way we look at the present time. If the dazzle can be defined as a lack of discernment of reality, we might say that the ultra-saturated era of disposable knowledge and images of all sorts in which we live today causes a collective and contemporary dazzle. In this sense, this repeated dazzle causes a sort of blindness when we think of our relationship to the present day. However this blindness, this forced but necessary loss of sight, which compels us to look back to the past, might also enable the emergence and the precision of our path ahead.

This exhibition is also based on hypotheses developed by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben

in a short essay entitled *What is the contemporary?*¹ in which he defines the contemporary as “the singular relationship with one’s own time to which one adheres by keeping one’s distance” – a definition that he further develops through various (physical, poetic, phenomenological) processes related to sight and vision. Indeed, based on neurophysiology of vision, Agamben explains that the darkness can therefore not be considered a mere absence of light, something like a non-vision, but the result of an activity. In this sense, perceiving the darkness of an era is not a form of inertia or passivity.

As he finally suggests, “contemporary is the one whose eyes directly receive the beams of darkness that come from his time.” Looking at the darkness would then be a way to avoid being blinded by the lights of our time. Artists from all times have regularly taken a step back into the past to confront the present and to anticipate the future.

The exhibition title comes from the “Iceland spar”, a variety of calcite that demonstrates double refraction: an object placed behind an Iceland crystal appears double, slightly shifted with respect to the original. This double refraction may be attributed to a temporal phenomenon: if the image of this object appears double, it is because light rays traveling through the crystal split into fast and slow beams; one of the images is older than the other and the rays – which are affected by the speed – are bent at different angles as they exit the crystal.

In a way, this hypothesis of the co-existence of a double temporality echoes the works presented in the exhibition in which certain anachronisms seem to exist to better express the present of which they are a part of. The blind and the dazzled figures (Julien Crépieux, Benoît Maire), the standards of representation (Isabelle Cornaro, Ryan Gander), the circulation of images (Mark Geffriaud, Clément Rodzielski), the distance from which we look at things of the past (Ulla von Brandenburg, Adrian Ghenie, Bojan Šarčević) are some of the elements that surround this exhibition and the works in it. The exhibition will be accompanied by a 12" LP vinyl edited and produced for the exhibition by Bruno Persat including songs, sounds and texts suggested by the artists in connection with the works on display.

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