

The notion of history as a chain of events that make up the past, capable of being isolated and arranged in a historical narrative, fails to contemplate the movement of time of the historical process. Francesco Arena's research is centred around ways of thinking about temporality, by revealing irruptions in the course of things that seem to conform to a linear development marked by causes and effects. The historical and the personal constantly overlap in the artist's work in his attempt to represent historical events based on a factual relationship with himself. We frequently encounter the use of the artist's anthropometric data (such as weight, body mass, height, distance from his eyes to the floor), acting as tangible figures to quantify history.

The date of September 26th, coinciding with the opening of the exhibition, marks the 78th anniversary of the death of Walter Benjamin in Portbou (Catalonia). Benjamin advanced a theory of progressive history that questioned the nineteenth-century concept of historical temporality, that is, a history according to a purpose and a subject acting in uniform linearity. He proposed instead that history erupts in moments of standstill which, in their arrest, manifest a structure of tensions to a revolutionary moment. This idea resonates throughout Arena's practice, where the eternal and the ephemeral meet; just as Benjamin establishes a conception of the present as "the time of the Now" (*Jetztzeit*), a temporal particle, the true place where history can happen.

The work, *Angolo Stanco*, which gives the exhibition its title, refers to the distance between the present and the death of Benjamin, breaking the *continuum* of history revealing the emergence and deployment of connections of distinctive temporalities, and to the configuration of history as the basis of a disruptive movement. A 78-year-old performer seated in an iron structure forming a right angle, recounts his life to the viewer. In this way, Arena analyzes the idea of celebrating the anniversary of a death through its opposite.

Past events become subject in other works in the exhibition. Regardless of their duration "the moment itself is nothing more than the continuity of time, a pure limit that simultaneously brings together and divides the past and the future "[1] . These intercepted fragments of time are comprised between different periods: one year, as we see in *Marble between 1 year* where a block of marble is placed between two diaries spanning one year; *Metro di zucchero smezzato (78 giorni)* refers to the time that Arena needs for the sugar sachets left over from his coffee to reach one meter; or in the 4'33 " of John Cage's silence recorded in 1299.5 cm of cassette tape, and contained in the length of the artist's extended arms, materialized in bronze, in *8 Arms with Times*.

[1] Giorgio AGAMBEN, *Infancia e historia. Destrucción de la experiencia de la historia*, Buenos Aires: Adriana Hidalgo, 2007, pg. 132.

Francesco Arena was born in Torre Santa Susanna, Brindisi, Italy, in 1978. Lives and works in Cassano delle Murge, Bari, Italy.

Francesco Arena's recent solo exhibitions include: *Due ritratti con persona*, Sprovieri Gallery, London, UK (2018); *Perimetro con quattro opere in uno spazio*, TRA, Treviso, Italy (2016); *Autumn Lines*, Sprovieri Gallery, London, United Kingdom (2016); *Jannis Kounellis – Francesco Arena*, Palazzo Baronale, Novoli, Lecce, Italy (2015); *Onze mille cent quatre-vingt sept jours*, Frac Champagne-Ardenne, Reims, France (2013).

He has also taken part in several group exhibitions, among which: *The Humans*, Kunstmuseum St.Gallen, St.Gallen, Switzerland; *Bajo el brazo: entre la palma de la mano y la axila*, CaixaForum, Barcelona, Spain (2018); *MAXXI re-evolution*, National Museum of XXI Century Arts, Roma, Italy (2017); *Mario Merz Prize. Finalists exhibition*, Fondazione Merz, Torino, Italy (2017); *Happy ending*, curated by Florence Derieux, Frac Champagne-Ardenne, Reims, France (2016); *Ennesima*, Triennale di Milano, Italy (2015); *Italy in Songeun. We have never been modern*, SongEun Artspace, Seoul, Korea (2014); *Vice Versa*, Italian Pavilion, 55 Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy (2013).

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