

OWLS TURN THEIR ENTIRE HEAD TO CHANGE VIEWS

Vittorio Santoro

March 6 – 31, 2012

At Fondation d'entreprise Ricard, Paris

Opening March 5, 2012 at 6.30 pm

Curator: Daniel Kurjakovic

The Fondation d'entreprise Ricard is delighted to present a solo exhibition by Vittorio Santoro, the first dedicated to the artist's work in a Parisian institution. The exhibition, *Owls Turn Their Entire Head to Change Views*, focuses on the lesser-known aspect of his allusive installations and sculptural works, while highlighting some enduring tropes of Santoro's practice such as his *time-based text drawings* and participatory script works. The Paris-based artist will also produce new installations and drawings specifically for the space. An artist book, featuring previously unseen material from the artist's ongoing research archives, will be published to coincide with the exhibition.

Vittorio Santoro's works are rooted in everyday observations, but push beyond them to reveal latent historical, aesthetic, socio-political, or even metaphysical realities. His characteristically intricate visual sensibility conceals a tension between the referential possibilities of objects and the choreographic nature of their placement in context. Santoro is sensitive to the unassuming nature of everyday interactions and through subtle means examines the notion of individual agency as it plays out within larger networks of clichés, common ideals, models of authority, or processes involving manipulation and power.

The installation *Reciprocal Scrutiny (bordereau)* (2009) evokes the ambivalence of perception. Here the re-photographed image of the so-called "bordereau", a hand-written memorandum, now kept in the French National Archives, comes prominently into view – an almost black square, reminiscent of Malevich, as if history were only a spectral entity. The "bordereau" was used to incriminate Alfred Dreyfus in the state conspiracy known as the "Dreyfus affair" in 1894. On the opposite wall the two words "reciprocal" and "scrutiny", in partly mirrored neon tubing, suggest a dialectical relationship between the opaque document and the neon signs. This arrangement, with its empty center, places the viewer in a silent channel where voices of the present and the past intersect. Santoro purposely undermines the obvious political capital of the work through characteristically spare visual and spatial strategies, playing with notions of distance, mirror effects and reversals.

Even the most complex situations are, for Santoro, rooted in the ordinary. *Goodbye Darkness IV, Elephants Don't Play Chess (a loose conversation on some aspects of BWV 1001–1006 with Kerwin Rolland)* (2010) consists of several industrially produced objects associated with interior spaces: a Venetian blind pierced by a wooden bar; two mirrors facing each other (one suspended) creating an infinite reflection and; pulsating light bulbs. This pulse is programmed according to a light cycle derived from the audio recording and transcription of a particular permuted sentence, visible in the captions that accompany the piece.

The work is loosely inspired by the polyphonic structure of Johann Sebastian Bach's '6 Violin Sonatas and Partitas' of 1720 and the mysterious, yet graspable, visual rhythm of the bulbs is suggestive of other coded languages. This corner piece interacts with the surrounding space by way of reflections, the use of partial symmetry and echoed motifs.

The exhibition will also showcase some of the *time-based text works* for which the artist is well known. In each case, graphite text sequences are thoughtfully placed on variously sized white sheets of paper and inscribed daily in the same spot – over a six-month period – adding a delicately sculptural dimension to them.

Other works, such as the elusive drawing *7 Erased Contributions* (2008 –) or the installation *The Void Left by Things* (2010/12), that will involve the team of the Fondation d'entreprise Ricard as collaborators, offer other routes into Santoro's examination of the everyday. Both series of works stem from his interest in the relationship between viewer and artist, between the act of creation and reception, as it plays out in an exhibition context. All are based on participatory scripts that involve another individual or a group of people for their construction and raise the issues about the social function of art.

Light-cycle installations such as *Taches de soleil dans la forêt* (2012) and a new sculptural work, comprising several parts, all relating to the Soviet cosmonaut Y. A. Gagarin (who is tragically synonymous with notions of political propaganda in the Cold War era), will also be on view.

Daniel Kurjakovic, November 2011

A public program consisting of several performances and events entitled 'Punctuations' will accompany the exhibition. The new artist book "D(a)edalus, my father's horse taken from the mill, a tourné en rond autour d'une statue de..." including documentary materials from the artist's ongoing archives includes a new essay by British critic Rebecca Geldard. Concurrently, Vittorio Santoro's sound installation 'You Are Still Here' (2008/2011) will be featured in the exhibition Le Nouveau Festival at the Centre Pompidou (February/March 2012).

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Exhibition March 6 – 31, 2012

Preview on Monday, March 5 at 6.30 pm

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Open Tuesday to Saturday from 11 am to 7 pm - free entrance.

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Images



This Impact Leads Into..., February – July 2011 (Origami/Sphinx), 2011, time-based text work (6 months).
Pencil on folded paper (149.5 x 149.5 cm), glass (200 x 90 x 0.6 cm), three found wood bars (partially with white paint), steel wire. Unique.
Photo: Patrick Lafievre © Vittorio Santoro.



Good-Bye Darkness IV – Elephants Don't Play Chess (a loose conversation on some aspects of BWV 1001-1006 with Kerwin Rolland), 2010, installation.
Venetian blind (250 x 120 cm), two oak plates with mirrors (each 80 x 49.5 cm) and two engraved synthetic plaques, oak bar, two light bulbs with base, electronic devices, programmed light cycle, steel wires, electric cables, several captions on wall. Unique (+ 1 E.A.).
Photo : Frédéric Lanternier © Vittorio Santoro.



The World Was Full of Objects and Events and Sounds That Are Known to be Real..., 2011. A group of twenty collages (newspaper images on paper) mounted on gray painted wood in plexiglass frame.
Photo: Patrick Lafievre. © Vittorio Santoro and Galerie Campagne Première, Berlin.

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