Domenico Quaranta

The (art) world Actually we have does not meet my standards

Surfing: The Biennial increased

with one comment

Domenico Quaranta, "Venice: the augmented reality", *Flash Art,* issue 295, July - September 2011, p. 33.
Downloadable pdf here .

Someone described the Venice Biennale, a Leviathan. The metaphor is well suited to describe a mammoth event, which can hardly be visited in its "institutional" (display, national pavilions, events), but also to evoke the many parasites that need the monster, and its effects, its existence : the painter of views which organizes its work along the streets leading to the Guggenheim Foundation to performers who inhabit improvised access to gardens, from private parties more or less animate the evenings of the opening wide programming that did not get , for various reasons, the approval of the Biennial.

The technology offers us a few years, another interesting metaphor: that of augmented reality *(augmented reality,* AR). The term, coined in the early nineties, refers to the introduction of a level "information" (three-dimensional images, but also sounds and texts) that overlaps with the physical reality, and which can be accessed using a special device. The metaphor is appropriate because it contrasts with the solidity of the Leviathan - which gives us the art capital, sanctioned by an evil device selectively - the fluid uncertainty of

parasites, from time to time too belated and too provincial, too radical to become part of 'official event.

This year, aided by the proliferation of *smart phones* and *tablets,* augmented reality was, however, for the Biennale, more than a metaphor. The number of parasitic events that have chosen to take this form is interesting, and sobering. On the one hand, augmented reality is unbearably elitist: only those who are equipped with the necessary, and can use it, can access it. For others, a QRCode is a sign as indecipherable as part of Holbein's skull. Of course, one could say the same thing on the Internet. But there are differences, and there are many: the *digital divide* still exists, but the economic and attitudinal barriers to access to the network have fallen over the years. Conversely, *smart* devices are still expensive, does not necessarily know how to use them, and there are still many who resist buying them for ideological reasons - in particular, the refusal to be *always on.*

Secondly, the AR shares with the new technology a substantial problem: excessive container contents. The AR is still infinitely more interesting than what an artist could ever do with it.

On the other hand, the subliminal nature, and its ability to infiltrate their messages in a non-invasive in public spaces, the AR makes a tremendous opportunity for artists. The nature of rental reveals clear links with the street art, and it is no accident that terms like "delusional", "infiltration", "constraints" and "freedom" is fulfilled in the communication of the two major events that have been joined at the Biennale: the *Invisible* homegrown *Pavilion,* organized by curator Simona Lodi and the artist group Les Liens Invisibles, and '*AR Intervention* orchestrated by the international group Manifest.AR. The first had already given proof of the subversive potential of making it appear AR, April 23 St. Peter's Square in Rome, an "invisible pink unicorn," a deity created the paradoxical as a parody of the monotheistic religions. The latter have a long experience with this, with unauthorized access of AR around the world, by the ICA in London at the MoMA in New York. Both have resulted in the halls alternative, at once monumental and invisible, in places such as the Biennale Gardens and Piazza San Marco. On the other hand, only worked Amir Baradan performer, best known for being offered in marriage to Marina Abramovic at *The Artist is Present. Augmented* in *Venice,* parasitism is even more evident because Baradan has "hooked" holds its interventions to specific visual scattered among national pavilions and Cordero. "I am interested in how small acts of resistance, in particular the so-called virtual domains, can create pockets of transformation," explains the artist.

We referred to the alleged elitism of augmented reality. The question, in fact, could be approached from another point of view: the tendency for communities interested in the socio-cultural impact of new technologies to build niches to operating margins of the great art events. Niches to which the wider audience for contemporary art remains a stranger, or on which throws up a curious glance. Augmented Reality aside, moments like these have been many: from *Pirate Camp* organized by Coniglioviola, a pirate camp for artists who challenge the ban on camping in the lagoon, the *Stateless Immigrants Pavilion,* which in the name of anonymity, and rejection of nomadism of national identity held a flash mob at the Gardens, and an attack on the site of the Biennale, in *Hall's Internet* Miltos Manetas, which excluded from the events, he moved to San Servolo and became a big *Bring Your Own Beamer (BYOB),* in which artists from around the world, arrived with their projectors, they showed their work. Commenting on the event of Rhizome, Karen Archey was questioned about this auto-segregation, in the midst of the mainstream, and its effectiveness. Perhaps, the answer he has given, two years ago, Manetas, linking its Internet Pavilion at the Pavilion of Realism of Courbet, built on the edge of the Universal Exposition. Just when the mainstream posing as a universalist, able to accommodate and absorb everything, camping at its edges may make sense: to show that not all is absorbed, and that the seeds of resistance and real change still smoldering under the ashes. Or higher, in the wind.