

A MUSEUM FOR HERMANN NITSCH IN NAPLES

Text by *Jürgen Schilling*

The *Museo Archivio Laboratorio per le Arti Contemporanee Hermann Nitsch*, situated in the historical centre of Naples, is the result of a wider project by Fondazione Morra that planned to open a documentation and study centre starting from the work of one of the main character of the contemporary international art, the Austrian artist Hermann Nitsch. His research, began at the end of the 50s of the XX century, brought to a complex and dramatic work of total art (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) acknowledged in the *Orgies Mysteries Theater*. Nitsch's theatre is composed of four essential elements which pervade each other: the written text with his theories and poetry, his monumental musical compositions, a huge pictorial production - his action painting, different utopic architectural projects, conceptual graphics - and the very detailed scores. These elements are the point of departure for Nitsch's projects which land into the executions of his Actions.

Nitsch's work consists in a non-stop strain of spectator's sensibility through the activation of the viewer's senses, as a result of synaesthetic phenomena, of self experience, of one sense strain in order to put into operation the rest of them. Hermann Nitsch's thought is clearly filled with psychoanalysis references. His work, breaking religious and sexual taboos, stimulates human sensations in a provocative and un-respectful way through a language composed of powerful elements which belonged already to the atavist and mythological language of ceremonies and reloaded into his Actions. The mysticism bonded to blood used by Christianity and the symbolization of Passion are nothing else but legacy of ancestral votive rituals. In his work there is a clear correspondence to the main characters of the Greek tragedy. Nitsch always investigates some symbolical themes as Defeat, Sin, Hope, Redemption, Life and Death which are evocated in his votive masses, allowing a both mental and physical experience.

Nitsch works with a very emotive and a very strong visual code, he quotes: "in this way i want to celebrate livelihood, (...) thanks to art, to the aesthetic experience i wish i could convey strong emotions so that life would be celebrated at its deepest".

Putting together blood and wine, animal carcasses, naked men, fruit and flowers, Action basically aim to be joyful rite throughout the noise music, men shouting, electronic instruments and stimulation of controversial feelings as joy and pain. Acoustic, visual effects, the deep stimulation of taste and smell, the strong tactile provocation, unfold at the same time their power through the immediate experience of the spectators to the actions, whose relicts composed of blood soaked shirts, liturgical vestments, chalices and stretchers become environmental installations. This constellation of objects - as medical devices, chest of drawers and ground sorted sheets - turns the exhibiting space into a kind of holy place where the spectator can experience the deep and pathetic sense of the action through the tangibility of the exhibited objects.

Actions' performances have been documented by multimedia techniques which are up to convey utterly the strength and the effect of the Action's course, the relicts later create totally independent environments able to show the basics of Nitsch's poetry and eventually become the essential elements of *Orgies Mysteries Theater* in the tangible space.

Nitsch's Museum is based in a completely renovated ex power station, there are two main rooms where some installations will be dressed and supported by a multimedia material. Installations are referred to Actions which took place between 1974 and 1996 in Düsseldorf, Naples, Florence and Trieste. Installations are personally filled by different works, some examples of graphics and drawings give a complete view of the conceptual world of the artist. Different photos series and videos document the actionist performance production. In a room it will be also possible to listen to some of his musical compositions. Inside the museum there will be a library and an archive where a

complete documentation of Hermann Nitsch writings, of all what has been written on him and multimedia material will be arranged and will allow a deep study of the philosophical and aesthetical intentions of the artist.

The Fondazione Morra whose mission is to define and study the social and experimental contemporary art and visual communication, opens a singular institution the *Museo Hermann Nitsch* that thanks also to its peculiar location will become of international remark.