

Motion To Space

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The exhibition 'Motion to Space' at the Istituto Svizzero in Milan (the other half is on display at the Galleria Milano) begins with a video by Teres Wydler. In 'San Gottardo' from 2012, the artist, who works in Zurich and Ticino, crosses the motorway tunnel heading south. The Gotthard mountain is a myth – for centuries the most important north-south connection.

In our concept, it opens up the transversal Zurich–Ticino–Lombardy and vice versa. 12 artists working with new media cross the Alps and connect Italy and Switzerland. Five are from German-speaking Switzerland, two of whom have studios in Ticino, three are from Ticino and four are Italian women who have close ties to Milan and its art scene.

Milan, home to Olivetti, a leading centre for computer development in the 1960s, and Zurich, a stronghold of Bauhaus culture and constructivism, are ideal exhibition and working spaces for an artistic avant-garde that uses new technologies for its visual research.

The tour then continues with two comparatively traditional media. Italian video artist Grazia Toderi, who is currently working on a major project about 'Apollo', presents us with a series of little-known drawings from 2009. Drawings also play an important role in media art as conceptual sketches or experimental interpretations. The thought, the idea often materialises in this way. For Toderi, the universe is bathed in the colour 'red' – glowing magma, fire, sun, coloured gas. Hence her title 'Orbite rosse'. But no red, no colour appears on her sheets of paper, only metallic tin foil, as if signifying permanent eruptions. Stars form and burn out. And yet there are always two eyes looking into space. The human eyes of our planet, gazing wide-eyed into space.

Opposite, on the front wall, is a large counterpart, the computer-animated video loop 'Full Cycle / Short Cut' (2012) by Teres Wydler. Her self-invented planetary system contrasts with slices of vegetables (such as cucumbers), thus connecting macrocosm with microcosm, the artist's central theme. Nature and the laws of growth encompass the entire creation. The third visual element in her cosmos is computer language, which expands our creative possibilities to infinity and regulates and accelerates growth in new dimensions.

In a window recess, a computer animation by Maia Hännny from 2007 shows the first sip of coffee in the prospect of a cup. The animation, created in painstaking detail, is the work of an 'amateur' who began her studies completely on the sidelines and was only recently 'discovered for art' (by Myriam Thyes, see Galleria Milano). Even a coffee cup can generate an orbit in which not only can the future be read, but the future itself is suggested by an almost magical visual power. Every object, every matter is energy and becomes spirit.

These cosmologies find their apotheosis in the black box of Penelope Mackworth-Pread, an English magician who has lived for decades with her husband, a composer of new music, in the artists' village of Carona above Lugano. Penelope has continued to develop her own starry sky and calls her new installation 'The Other Side of the Sky'. Fluorescent and phosphorescent, her steel star formations burn out and emerge in the darkness of space. We have just read how scientists have observed the disappearance of a nebula in a black hole in the Milky Way. Penelope anticipated this discovery in her latest vision, 'Nebula' (2015), and exemplifies the simultaneity of scientific and artistic innovations. What's more, her 'Milky Way' is a breathtaking, magical experience. Like the first time you marvelled at the starry night sky as a child.

A child in awe: in Sara Rossi's video installation 'Radar' (2005), a child walks on the moon in shoes that are much too big (Armstrong). It collects moon water. Pulcinella and his companions set off on an expedition from Tiepolo's etchings. Birds and aeroplanes float through the picture, and doors to unknown rooms open again and again.

Architecture and fantasy merge. The artist captures her dreams, her longings, desires and memories with long and fine (radar) antennas. In her poetological inner cosmos, the world dances angelically and floats from the back room of the exhibition to its beginning.



There they encounter the fabric angels of Aglaia Haritz. The well-travelled young artist from Ticino adorns her self-sewn figurines with the insignia of our time: computer language, Facebook photos, printed collages of political events.

Innocence versus violence. Her 'Angel of Blood' (2013) is saturated with veins like branches and finds its earthy continuation in a video animation at its feet: in the pulse of the blood, sounds of demonstrations from all over the world rise and fade away. The chanted slogans of liberation follow the rhythm of the blood, of the hearts.

The '12 bottiglie e altri pezzi in vetro', vessels for the 'Acqua di luna', fit into this narrative level of the exhibition. They stand and reflect in the middle of the video 'Il molino', the latest work by Sara Rossi. It is inspired by a sketch by Leonardo: a rotating wheel that draws water. In the rain of drops and the glitter of the glass, the two works merge into a unity in red.

Motion to Space: All new media, from photography to film, from video to computers, benefit from the possibility of movement, the timeline in space. This opens up striking new dimensions in the visual arts, pictorial equivalents of scientific innovations. From Leonardo to Einstein.

We are only at the beginning of conquering and shaping new visual spaces. Digital art will be the visual revolution of the 21st century, just as photography was for the 19th century and film for the 20th century. On verrà.

Galleria Milano

The exhibition section of *Motion to Space* in the venerable Galleria Milano begins with a brand new video animation by Elisabeth Eberle. In a striking graphic form, it shows the metamorphosis of a field mouse silhouette into that of a drone. Bird to aeroplane, or nature to weapon. The similarity of the forms, right down to their movements, is striking. Metamorphosis is the central theme of this artist, who studied pharmacy at ETH Zurich. The main object of her scientific interest and desire is the diverse states of magnolia fruits. Her wealth of associations is brilliant, ranging from sexual connotations to the taboo realm of faeces. Even decay is bursting with the power of transformation.

This appears in the early, colourful video animation on the left side of the central cube as well as in the powerful wooden sculpture rubbed with graphite towards the corner of the room. The plotter drawings on the wall, called 'Artifacts', also refer to the fruit, but transform it into a multidimensional network of lines. What may appear to be a classic pen-and-ink drawing follows the programme of the plotter, i.e. a machine, just as the sculptural form is laser-cut and the video animation is artificial.

Eberle penetrates the material with various instruments and opens up a view of a microcosm of the plant world, revealing its laws and possibilities for transformation through visual artistic means. Matter is a cosmos in its own right.

Maia Hännny's works correspond to Eberle's research. Since 2011, the artist has devoted herself to the meticulous, laborious task of visually depicting the life of bugs. Like Eberle's magnolia fruits, these tiny creatures are not exactly among the most pleasant manifestations of nature. Maia Hännny approaches them on the one hand in the manner of a scientific illustrator, examining all forms of life, and on the other hand with the wit and sarcasm of an artist.

In her six pigment prints to the left and right of the entrance door, she enlarges the animals to monumental size, catalogues them and captures them with the net structures of computer animation. On the projection opposite the cube, the animals lead a liberated life of luxury, even if they disappear into a blue hole.

They also engage in conversation with the wonderful mosquito wallpaper that spans the vaulted ceiling of the gallery's office space. In any case, Eberle and Hännny accompany us on a trip into the little-known realms of the microcosm, which – as natural science reports – is equivalent to the universe.

In each of the two corners of the main wall, a picture body by Sarah Ciraci from last year is enthroned. These are metal parts mounted in a circular shape on purple velvet, evoking mandalas. Although they are sculptural reliefs, they convey a kind of frozen movement and thus radiate an aura into the room. They captivate the viewer. The left-hand image is called 'Neural', referring to its neurological structure; in any case, it depicts corresponding cell structures on an organised surface. A metaphor for life.

The other, entitled 'Elettronica-mente', refers to the structures of electronic devices such as the inner workings of a computer or a cellulare, as mobile phones are aptly called in Italian. This work engages in an exciting dialogue with Elisabeth Eberle's 'Blue Metaphors' and new, more abstract 'Artifacts', but above all with Maya Vonmoos' computer-generated sculpture and even Maria Pecchioli's installation, in its circular form, movement and stuttering sound.

Maya Vonmoos' sculpture from 2010, produced using a complex 3D printing process, is part of a series of research projects that the artist has dedicated to 'Cosmic Dust'. These tiny particles of cosmic substance, recognised by natural science, also follow laws that the sculpture suggests in a confusing expansion into infinite space.

Next to this digitally created, three-dimensional prototype of technically advanced design hang twelve small, classically framed picture panels, which the artist painted by hand. (Incidentally, the same confusion is caused by Elisabeth Eberle's six 'Artificialias' in meaningful proximity to Sarah Ciriaci's 'Neural Network': flowers that mutate into computer forms.)

Vonmoos, however, has taken the formal vocabulary of her painted 'Spacy Pearls' from computerised templates in order to escape, for once, the often-attributed 'technical coldness' of her computer-generated painting. Trained at traditional academies in Florence and Geneva, she paints a series of luminous spheres in miniature mania, acrylic on cardboard.

The rear, darkened room of the exhibition brings together works by Myriam Thyes, Maria Pecchioli and Maya Vonmoos, which are dedicated in the broadest sense to the expansions of the city and its structures.

In the centre of the room, a ceiling projection by Myriam Thyes shines: 'After Tiepolo' begins with the evocation of his major work in Würzburg, the huge ceiling composition depicting the (then four known) continents, which, as always in his art of spatial expansion, flow into the sky and into infinity. In Thyes' interpretation, this expands into an interplanetary system in which the hubris of skyscrapers appears as set pieces of planetary life on our Earth.

On a table placed next to this projection lies the conceptual work by Laura Solari and Pierrette Stany: 'I tre candidati'. Three stacks of photocopies with Wikipedia printouts of Gian Battista Tiepolo, the artist Solari herself and an unknown contemporary of Tiepolo. A commentary on history and meaning.

It also refers to the origin of the entire project, which originated in the Max Museum in Chiasso, where an etching exhibition with works by Tiepolo was taking place at the same time. His endeavour to venture beyond the given architectural spatial conditions into an imaginary space formed our intellectual starting point. It is interesting to note that Tiepolo and the polymath Leonardo also form an important source in the work of Sara Rossi, while Maya Vonmoos' 'Spacy Pearls' draw on the chiselled miniatures of Jan van Eyck, and her computer-generated animation 'Goldilock' on Borromini's domes, an often disturbing extension of space.

While the 2013 digital animation 'Le nain' corresponds to the 'Spacy Pearls' with its explosive spatiality, in 'Goldilock' we look beyond Borromini's dome oval into space. The tongue-in-cheek wisdom of an owl accompanies us on an endless journey into fleeing city structures and interstellar constellations, stations on the conquest of the universe. 'Goldilock' is the name given by astrophysicists to the wafer-thin zone where planet Earth and its form of life reside.

Myriam Thyes' two-part video installation 'Ascension / Depression Marquis' is more realistic at first glance. In a luxury New York hotel, two lifts travel up and down all the floors at the same time. However, the cheerful, exhilarating journey ends on the one hand with a golden Madonna and on the other with the inferno that Dante describes as a desert of ice.

And in the installation 'Plotting the Urban Body – Manhattan New York', Maria Pecchioli uses an overhead projector to cast the diagram of a city and its project onto the wall, but the core of her programme is an iPad tablet mounted on it, which contains information about the inner body of the city and is linked to human organs.

As in her 'Healing Sounds,' this connection goes back to Chinese medicine and opens up a space for thought and research that is linked to the introductory works by Eberle and Hännny.

In the rear room of Galleria Milano, near the back entrance door, which also leads to the ISR via Via Manin and Piazza Cavour, a sound installation by Laura Solari accompanies visitors into the outside world. Step by step. An invisible metaphor for the secrets that await us, which perhaps want to be revealed. 'Oppure': The field is open.

The twelve artists in the exhibition 'Motion to Space' have stretched their artistic feelers, their antennas and technical instruments far into new visual spaces. That there are twelve women is perhaps coincidence, perhaps inspiration, intuition – perhaps a programme.

On verrà. Their 'radar' shows the contours of larger contexts than Giordano Bruno, Galileo, Nils Bohr or Einstein ever dreamed of.

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