

ARTE

## A Riposto il viaggio nell'arte di Seb Patane fa riflettere sull'identità e la duplicità dell'essere

S'intitola "Vorrei Regnare" la personale dell'artista siciliano, visitabile fino al prossimo 20 agosto presso Palazzo Vigo a Torre Archirafi (Riposto, CT)

Dal passato al presente, dal personale all'impersonale. L'arte di Seb Patane è prima di tutto elaborazione, sublimazione di elementi di vissuto (proprio, ma non solo) in una riflessione allo stesso tempo malinconica e ironica. I suoi lavori sono intrisi d'un'astuta "ingenuità apparente", che invita lo spettatore a prendere le mosse dalla semplicità dello sguardo infantile per sviscerare a fondo il concetto di identità, sia essa intesa in modo individuale, sia in modo collettivo. In questo senso la mostra "Vorrei Regnare", curata da Salvo Perinzi e visitabile gratuitamente fino al prossimo 20 agosto presso "Palazzo Vigo" a Riposto, offre spunti interessanti sia per gli amanti dell'arte contemporanea sia per coloro che, semplicemente, volessero riflettere attraverso lo sguardo per certi versi duplice di un artista siciliano di nascita, ma residente a Londra da ormai 25 anni.



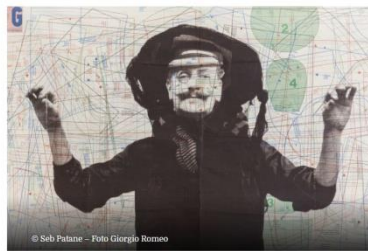
© Seb Patane - Foto Giorgio Romeo



© Seb Patane - Foto Giorgio Romeo

**LE FOTOGRAFIE.** Il tema dell'identità è centrale nell'opera di Seb Patane e lo ritroviamo in alcune fotografie elaborate digitalmente. Per lo più si tratta di raffigurazioni di gigolò inglesi degli anni '30 e raffigurazioni di uomini vittoriani le cui immagini sono state distorte in fase di scansione. Il risultato sono immagini grottesche e affascinanti in cui, tuttavia non vediamo mai gli occhi dei protagonisti. «I volti» spiega ancora Patane «conferiscono ai personaggi una carica narrativa molto forte, a me però interessa più la composizione che la loro storia». A emergere da questi lavori è anche una certa musicalità, altro tratto saliente della produzione di Seb Patane.

**I CARTAMODELLI.** «Ogni volta che organizzo una mostra - spiega l'artista - cerco sempre di cogliere tutte le occasioni che mi consentano di rendere più tridimensionali i miei lavori». Nel caso della personale a Palazzo Vigo questo concetto si esprime in vari modi, tra i quali alcuni pannelli "sovrapposti" che dal muro "sconfinano" sul pavimento. Si tratta di alcune serigrafie realizzate su cartamodelli da carta raffiguranti alcune immagini che richiamano a una delle costanti dell'arte di Patane: l'amore per il periodo vittoriano. «Volevo creare un contrasto tra mascolinità e femminilità, così ho sovrappreso delle immagini prettamente maschili nella confusione astratta del cartamodello».



© Seb Patane - Foto Giorgio Romeo

**DAI RICORDI D'INFANZIA A JODOROWSKY.** L'allestimento ripostese propone anche un audiovisivo realizzato nel 2011. Si tratta di un viaggio autobiografico in cui ritroviamo i luoghi dell'infanzia (molte immagini sono girate in Sicilia), fino ai riferimenti alle amate letture di Alejandro Jodorowsky con una poesia ispirata a "La danza della realtà" che l'artista ci propone recitata nel video ed esposta sulla parete che affianca il televisore. In questa parte della sala troviamo anche l'opera prestata alla locandina, una pagina de "I quindici" raffigurante un bambino, cui l'artista ha aggiunto - durante la sua infanzia - alcuni inserti: lacrime e ali di pipistrello.



© Seb Patane - Foto Giorgio Romeo

**LA CARICATURA DI CARNOT.** Immancabile, da dieci anni a questa parte, nelle mostre di Seb Patane è la raffigurazione della caricatura del presidente Francesco Marie François Sadi Carnot, realizzata alla fine del XIX secolo. «Fu ideata da un artista di strada - spiega ancora - come una sorta di giocattolino. Si trattava di una scultura in legno che, una volta esposta al sole, proiettava la silhouette del presidente. Ci sono particolarmente legato e ogni volta la propongo in maniera sempre diversa».

**VORREI REGNARE.** Il pezzo principale della mostra, che troneggia in mezzo alla sala, è una scultura in legno raffigurante una barchetta di carta sulla quale l'artista ha rigoccolato la scritta "Vorrei Regnare".

mediante la calligrafia del cantante new wave Gacho, che ha collaborato alla sua realizzazione. Anche qui il vissuto personale di Patane s'interseca con la sua arte: ci sono i rimandi a Riposto, alla musica degli anni '80 e un riferimento (proprio nel titolo) a quel Regno Unito divenuto sua seconda patria. In un gioco che fa riflettere sul concetto di autorialità (l'opera è dell'artista siciliano, ma la firma è del cantautore milanese) il concetto d'identità assume poi una portata più ampia. Ai tempi della Brexit ciò che potrebbe salvarci è un rimando all'infanzia, al gioco, ma allo stesso tempo questo non è sufficiente a non far naufragare il nostro futuro. «In un certo senso - conclude l'artista - quest'opera è una sorta di suggerimento verso un ottimismo ingenuo e poetico, un equilibrio tra possibilità, impossibilità e gioco».

**FINO AL 30.I.2015**  
**SEB PATANE**  
**GALLERIA FONTI, NAPOLI**

Un viaggio nell'inconscio. Alla scoperta di inquietudini ed ansie attraverso video e suono

arianna piccolo



pubblicato venerdì 12 dicembre 2014

È questione di un attimo. Sei seduto su una poltroncina vintage, impegnato nell'ascolto di parole che percepisci lontane, estranee. Pochi istanti dopo, le due registrazioni audio/video di "Abdomen" cominciano a scavarti dentro. Inconsapevolmente ti trovi immerso in un viaggio, nella parte più buia e nascosta del tuo Inconscio.

Dodici lunghi minuti, lasciato solo con te stesso. L'ultima personale di **Seb Patane** (Catania 1970, vive a Londra), ha questo potere: farti sentire una morsa allo stomaco. L'ipocondria (dal Greco hypochondros, Addome), che si manifesta nella costante angoscia di ammalarsi, rende pienamente ciò che si avverte durante l'ascolto delle due opere.

Una sensazione d'inquietudine e ansia, che fuoriesce dal subconscio e lentamente ti pervade. Quello che senti e vedi, lungo le pareti della Galleria Fonti, non è altro che la proiezione della tua ombra. La musica, elemento caratterizzante delle performance dell'artista, utilizzata nella sua funzione ritmica e come riempitivo a sostegno degli altri elementi della "scenografia" espositiva, in questo caso diventa il legante tra i suoni e le parole. La prima registrazione *Gustav Metzger as Erwin Piscator, Gera, January 1915* è un lavoro video/sonoro monocromatico in cui si mescolano realtà e finzione, storia, letteratura e biografia. La conoscenza dell'artista Gustav Metzger, nel corso di una residenza presso il Wysing Arts Centre, Bourn, Inghilterra, indusse Patane a chiedergli di essere registrato mentre leggeva un passo del libro *The Political Theatre*, scritto nel 1929 da Erwin Piscator, regista teatrale, che Patane stava leggendo. La sovrapposizione Piscator - Metzger, non è casuale, i due uomini, anche se vissuti in tempi e luoghi differenti, sono entrambi artisti tedeschi impegnati politicamente. Lo stesso Patane era stato incuriosito dalla figura di Piscator perché a lui è intitolato il teatro di Catania, sua città natale. Intrecci di vite suggeriti dal subconscio dell'artista, che in una fotografia si è "anti-ritratto" nei panni di Piscator, rifacendosi al brano letto da Metzger in cui il regista teatrale, in partenza per la Prima Guerra Mondiale, aveva indossato degli abiti inadeguati, simbolo forse del suo rifiuto per il combattimento. Questa prima registrazione, in cui non si avverte ancora una piena empatia con i suoni percepiti, rappresenta la parte iniziale di un percorso interiore e può essere definita "sospensione d'incredulità".

U n i n c r e d u l i t à .



*Seb Patane, Kollapsing New People (Via Larga)*

Segue *Abdomen*, un'opera sonora più lunga, realizzata sempre in collaborazione con Giancarlo Trimarchi, introdotta dalla voce di Metzger e seguita da un audio collage in cui si mescolano musiche originali, registrazioni di suoni della natura provenienti dal Cambridgeshire e un passo del romanzo di satira di guerra *The Good Soldier Sveik*, scritto dallo scrittore Ceco Jaroslav Hasek (1923) e letto da Cécile B. Evans, altra compagna conosciuta in Inghilterra. La musica è opprimente, l'ansia divampa passando dall'addome al torace, il ritmo del respiro aumenta e segue l'incalzare dei suoni, che senti corrispondere al battito del cuore. Vorresti alzarti, ma a fermarti c'è una breve canzone, realizzata insieme al musicista Andrew Moss, che chiude l'opera.

Il brano fa riferimento agli attacchi di ipocondria vissuti dallo stesso Patane, ma anche alle lettere di Dante Gabriel Rossetti a Ford Madox Brown che raccontavano di una morente Lizzie Siddal. Seb Patane si serve dell'utilizzo psichedelico di inserti di musica contemporanea in modo da condurre chi ascolta a un'espansione della coscienza. Questo stato psichico consente di poter contenere dentro di sé passato e presente, biografia e letteratura, ansia personale e universale. La giustapposizione di elementi appartenenti a coordinate spazio-temporali differenti, mediante l'azione unificatrice del subconscio, tipica della produzione dell'artista, avviene questa volta quasi esclusivamente a livello acustico. Il viaggio sonoro è alle ultime battute, il ritmo della musica diviene più lento, il respiro è calmo e torna la luce, come a indicare la fine di un percorso interiore e il ritorno verso una più rassicurante razionalità.

# NERO

## "THE FOREIGNERS STAND STILL" BY SEB PATANE – BOOK LAUNCH IN LONDON



NERO and Fondazione Giuliani are pleased to announce the launch on **Friday, February 21st**, of *The Foreigners Stand Still*, the new artist's book by **Seb Patane**. The book presentation will be held in London at **X Marks the Bökship**.

This book could be contemplated as a kind of narrative in which each chapter corresponds to a specific artwork. Through a collage of images and texts, the artist creates a constellation of personal, historical and actual events, sometimes invented, which inspired every work.

The catalogue has been published in conjunction with Patane's exhibition *The Foreigners Stand Still*, in 2013 at Fondazione Giuliani in Rome and curated by the Foundation's Director Adrienne Drake.

At the launch, the book will be sold at the special price of 10 GBP, and signed by the artist. It is also available through the NERO website [here](#).

[X Marks the Bökship](#) is a bookshop and project space for independent publishers in London, UK which specialises in small press publications by artists and designers. It promotes contemporary publishing activity through book launches, events and production resources that bring together individual practitioners in order to create a local publishing community.

Join the event on Facebook [here](#)

**Friday 21st of February**  
**from 6.30 to 8.30 pm**  
**X Marks the Bökship**  
**210 / Unit 3 Cambridge Heath Road**  
**London, UK**





## SEB PATANE E LUCA TREVISANI

by Redazione Hestetika | lug 14, 2015 | Art | 0 comments



**Il Museo Civico di Castelbuono, in occasione del Ypsigrock Festival 2015, presenta le due mostre *As unreal as everything else* di Seb Patane e *Grand Hotel ed des Palmes* di Luca Trevisani, in collaborazione con l'Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Parigi e il Museo Naturalistico Francesco Minà Palumbo di Castelbuono, a cura di Laura Barreca e Valentina Bruschi.**

I due progetti sono realizzati in collaborazione con Ypsigrock Festival, eletto quest'anno miglior Festival di musica d'Italia che presenta una nutrita line-up di musicisti internazionali. Durante i concerti del Festival (7, 8 e 9 agosto, dalle 21) verranno presentate le opere video degli artisti sulla facciata del medievale Castello dei Ventimiglia, trasformando la piazza e l'architettura del Castello in una gigantesca superficie visuale e per condividere l'attività di ricerca del Museo con

lo spirito di sperimentazione contemporanea audio-visuale che anima il festival. Nella mostra *As Unreal as Everything Else*, Seb Patane presenta un nuovo video sulla pratica dei Book Club, gli incontri dove i membri del gruppo si riuniscono per discutere di un libro scelto.

L'artista, la scorsa primavera, ha organizzato un "Book Club" con gli amici dell'associazione GRU di Giarre, per parlare del racconto breve *La Nebbia*, della scrittrice inglese Anna Kavan. Il video ruota intorno all'idea della nebbia, come metafora di distacco o anche protezione dai contatti e dalle relazioni umane. Il suono del video è stato realizzato dal nuovo progetto musicale dell'artista, Fog School, con una serie di collaboratori tra Catania e Berlino. Insieme a Book Club sarà presentato al pubblico il video *Year of the Corn*, un video ipnotico di sei minuti in cui la relazione tra la componente visuale e la ricerca musicale è determinante. Sarà inoltre in mostra una versione inedita di *Absolute Korperkontrolle*, con una grande stampa su tela di un'immagine fotografica che ritrae degli scalatori durante una spedizione sulla vetta del K2, tra i quali l'occultista Alesteir Crowley, che ha vissuto a Cefalù, non lontano da Castelbuono, dove fondò la famosa Abbazia di Théléma, dunque una presenza strettamente legata alla storia del territorio.

*Grand Hotel et des Palmes* di Luca Trevisani è un progetto realizzato in collaborazione con l'Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Parigi, con il Museo Naturalistico Francesco Minà Palumbo di Castelbuono e con la collaborazione del Grand Hotel delle Palme di Palermo. Un progetto in fieri sviluppato attraverso una serie di mostre, tenute recentemente negli Istituti Italiani di Cultura di Parigi e di Madrid, dedicate al rapporto tra mondo vegetale, paesaggio, e sguardo antropocentrico, che prende in esame le proprietà strutturali della visione e il suo rapporto problematico con la realtà. A Castelbuono l'artista continua la sua ricerca estetica sul nostro personale sistema percettivo, ed esamina la comprensione del mondo naturale attraverso la sua riduzione in immagini. Le opere in mostra sono frutto di un lavoro di ricerca durato diversi mesi, grazie alla collaborazione con il Museo Minà Palumbo, la cui collezione botanica e l'importante erbario ottocentesco che raccoglie le specie erbacee del territorio siciliano delle Madonie è stata oggetto di studio e di ispirazione per i lavori di Luca Trevisani.

Il titolo del progetto deriva dal nome del celebre albergo palermitano nel quale venne ritrovato il corpo senza vita di Raymond Roussel, scrittore francese amato dai Surrealisti e tra i fondatori della Patafisica, scienza delle costruzioni immaginarie, suicidatosi il 14 luglio del 1933. Eccentrico, dandy e autore di culto, Roussel è rievocato dall'artista in quanto appassionato difensore della libertà di espressione, simbolo del potere rivoluzionario della fantasia, concetto presente in tutta la ricerca artistica di Trevisani. Seb Patane *As Unreal as Everything Else* Ex- Scuderie Luca Trevisani *Grand Hotel et des Palmes* Sala San Giorgio Le mostre sono accompagnate da due pubblicazioni, edite da Kalòs Edizioni d'Arte, con testi critici di Luca Cerizza, scrittore, critico d'arte e curatore. Al termine della mostra, un'opera di Luca Trevisani e di Seb Patane – commissionate e prodotte dal Museo Civico di Castelbuono – entreranno a far parte della collezione permanente del Museo Civico.



← Cy Twombly tire un trait

14 juillet 2011 →

08 juillet 2011

## 400 Sonnets in Reverse, Together de Seb Patane



Bettina SteinBrügge et Seb Patane

La [Kunsthalle Mulhouse](#) présente **400 Sonnets in Reverse, Together**, jusqu'au 28 août 2011, la première exposition consacrée à [Seb Patane](#) \* dans une institution publique française. Seb Patane est né en Italie en 1970. Après son diplôme à Goldsmiths (2002), il a très vite attiré l'attention des critiques par son travail sur de nombreux supports telsque la vidéo, la sculpture, la performance et le collage.

L'exposition de la Kunsthalle présente une sélection d'oeuvres récentes, rassemblées spécialement pour l'occasion. Le commissariat de l'exposition est assuré pour la 3e fois, par [Bettina Steinbrügge](#). Le titre de l'exposition de Patane à Mulhouse, 400 Sonnets in Reverse, Together, est extrait de la chanson « The Be Colony » (2009) du groupe britannique Broadcast, que l'on peut entendre à l'entrée de l'exposition. L'album d'où la chanson est tirée, Broadcast & The Focus Group Investigate Witch Cults Of The Radio Age, est un hommage à la chanteuse Trish Keenan, décédée à la suite de complications d'une pneumonie au début 2011. [Hommage à Trish Keenan](#)

Dans son article sur l'oeuvre de Patane, Rob Young écrit :

*« Profondément enfouie dans la bande sonore, on entend la voix de Patane, bien que déformée électroniquement et donc à peine reconnaissable, chantant le vers en question de manière répétitive. Le morceau est une plainte pour Keenan, mais fait également écho à sa croyance, exprimée dans plusieurs interviews avant sa mort, en la notion de psychédéisme vue comme processus d'autodétermination et de transformation ».*

En plus de cette pièce sonore présentée en ouverture, l'exposition permet de voir une nouvelle oeuvre filmique, **The Year of the Corn, 2011**



Year of The Corn video still



## First solo show by Seb Patane in an Italian institution opens at Fondazione Giuliani



Last Dance of the Nodding Folk, 2007-13. Mixed media installation, dimensions variable. Photo: Giorgio Benni.

**ROME.** - [Fondazione Giuliani](#) presents *The Foreigners Stand Still*, the first solo show by Seb Patane in an Italian institution.

The exhibition is based on an idea of unconventional performance and aims to convey a sense of "organized chaos", playing on a balance between visual rhythms and subtly incongruent sounds. Photographs, video and sound pieces are like components of a theatre set, composed in order to suggest an environment suspended between reality and fiction where sounds and images operate at the subconscious level. Patane creates alternative spaces of action and fruition, reflecting on abstraction rather than representation to deconstruct, reassemble and trigger new productions of meaning.

Formally austere, the installations only appear to contain a clearly defined message, while creating flexible and dynamic environments in which reminiscences of architectural structures are combined with symbols of violence and collective rebellion. Photographs and prints of marked historical and political connotations are selected through an instinctive, subjective approach: what attracts the artist is not so much the content of these testimonials of the past – collective gatherings, rituals and propaganda messages – but rather their aesthetic function, at one time a tool to convey a precise message, today cues for new visualizations. In the work *Imperial (Enter Chorus and Actors)*, for example, the image of the arrival of George V's coffin at King's Cross Station in London is read by Patane as "accidental choreography": a photograph that in its origins depicts a State ceremony, in the present suggests to the artist a sort of dance. The artist gives his own point of view, but the potential of the image continues to be called into play to develop from spectator to spectator. The sound element acts as a rhythmic particle of the visual structure, which increases the internal contrast while simultaneously constructing a type of mantra.

For *The Foreigners Stand Still* Patane has created new versions of *Live in Pankow*, *A Series of Graceful Juggling Tricks* and *Monsieur Carnot*, all of which are specially arranged into new configurations to underscore a core belief of the artist: that truths are never fixed and always changing. New productions include the sound piece *Che La Festa Cominci* – inspired by the book of the same name by Niccolò Ammaniti and created in collaboration with Giancarlo Trimarchi – and the video *Movement* (featuring Rose Kallal), which includes the participation of the artist and musician Rose Kallal and contains key concepts of the exhibition. Characterized by sound interferences that oscillate between a sense of play and menace, the video presents fragments of different experiences associated with a sojourn of the artist in New York in 2011 that resurface both directly and indirectly. Related to a performance held at the ICA in London, one section of the video connects, through the unsettling feeling of threat instigated by the very stillness of a group of men ready for action, to the phenomenon of peaceful protests, like that of the Occupy Wall Street movement. Patane unites his focus on the dynamics of protest with a reflection on the concept of tradition, and on the difficulty of entering into a relationship with the understanding of the history and politics of a particular country. To this work is tied a story that recalls in a surreal way an experience of the artist and from which is taken the title of the exhibition.

Seb Patane (b. 1970, Catania, Sicily) lives and works in London. Recent solo shows include *Year of the Corn*, International Art Objects, Los Angeles (2011); *400 Sonnets in Reverse*, Together, Kunsthalle Mulhouse, France (2011); *Entrano il Coro e gli Attori*, Galleria Fonti, Naples (2011); Seb Patane, Maureen Paley, London (2009); *So this song kills fascists*, Art Now, Tate Britain, London (2007); *Live in Pankow*, REC, Berlin (2007). Selected group exhibitions include *La storia che non ho vissuto* (testimone indiretto), Castello di Rivoli, Italy (2012); *Utopia Gesamtkunstwerk*, 21er Haus, Vienna (2012); *Performative Attitudes*, Kunsthhaus Glarus, Switzerland (2010); *Voyages from Italy*, Magasin – Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble (2010); *The Object of the Attack*, David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2009).

16/6/2011

## Seb Patane

KUNSTHALLE MULHOUSE CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN, MULHOUSE

A selection of Patane's recent works, some of which have been conceived especially for the occasion and in relation to the gallery's context, site and past history. '400 Sonnets In Reverse, Together', the piece of music that gives the title to Patane's Mulhouse exhibition and that will be on show in the entrance area of the exhibition, takes its title from a line in the lyric of 'The Be Colony' (2009) by the English group Broadcast.

COMUNICATO STAMPA

Curated by Bettina Steinbrugge

La Kunsthalle Mulhouse is delighted to present—400 Sonnets in Reverse, Together, the first solo exhibition of Seb Patane in a public institution in France. Seb Patane was born in Italy in 1970. He graduated from Goldsmiths in 2002 and soon earned critical acclaim for his work across a diverse range of media including video, sculpture, performance and collage. The exhibition at La Kunsthalle Mulhouse presents a selection of Patane's recent works, some of which have been conceived especially for the occasion and in relation to the gallery's context, site and past history.

400 Sonnets In Reverse, Together, the piece of music that gives the title to Patane's Mulhouse exhibition and that will be on show in the entrance area of the exhibition, takes its title from a line in the lyric of "The Be Colony" (2009) by the English group Broadcast. Besides the sound piece, the exhibition will contain the artist's latest video installation, Year of the Corn (2011), as well as a large new sculptural piece, some new wall-based works, and the considered addition of a few works from recent years.

Patane's work shifts back and forth between abstraction and figuration, between the suggestion of narrative and its un-doing as fragmented form, but there is a consistent and driving charge to his output throughout the past ten years that seems to be to do with a repeated and compulsive return – whether in two or three dimensional work - to certain archetypal images, like the figures in the Patrons Paper series, four large screenprints on found clothes patterns that have been produced especially for the exhibition in Mulhouse. Patane is playing an intricate game of references, symbols and signs, which touch different buttons depending on the private context of each viewer.

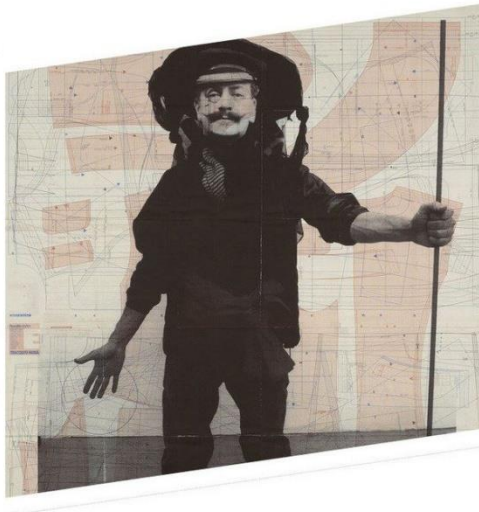
On the occasion of the exhibition in Mulhouse, his first monograph will be published by DISTANZ including texts by Rob Young, Catherine Wood and Heike Munder.

Seb Patane's recent solo exhibitions include "So this song kills fascists", Art Now, Tate Britain, 2007, Art Statements, Art 40 Basel and Constellations, Artissima, Turin, both in 2009. Patane has had previous solo shows at China Art Objects Galleries, Los Angeles and Galleria Fonti Naples, as well as Maureen Paley, London. His work has been included in numerous group shows, such as Compass in Hand: Selections from The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York and White Interwoven Echoes Drip into a Hybrid Body, migros museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich and in 2006 he was nominated for Beck's Futures. Patane lives and works in London.

Enquiries/Press office: Schwarb Clarisse +33 (0)3 69 77 66 47  
[Clarisse.schwarb@mulhouse.fr](mailto:Clarisse.schwarb@mulhouse.fr)

Opening Friday, 17 June from 7.00 to 10.00 pm

La Kunsthalle Mulhouse / La Fonderie  
Centre d'Art Contemporain (contemporary art center)  
16 rue de la Fonderie, 68093 Mulhouse Cedex  
hours: wed-sun 12-18  
admission free







The Influence of Furniture on Love with An Endless Supply, Ruth Beale, Juliette Blightman, Ben Brierley, Céline Condorelli, Luca Frei, Seb Patane, Florian Roithmayr, Phil Root, Laure Prouvost, Cally Spooner, The Grantchester Pottery, Philomene Pirecki, Elizabeth Price, Jess Flood-Paddock, Gil Leung, Mark Aerial Waller, Neal White and Lisa Wilkens

Giles Round has had a close association with Wysing since he was first in-residence at the centre in early 2011. That same year, Round established the decorative arts company The Grantchester Pottery at Wysing, with fellow residency artist Phil Root, and subsequently both The Grantchester Pottery and Round have contributed to a large number of exhibitions and events at Wysing.

*The Influence of Furniture on Love* is an exhibition in Wysing Arts Centre's 17th century farmhouse. The title of the exhibition is taken from an unpublished essay by economist John Maynard Keynes entitled "Can we consume our surplus or the influence of furniture on love" (1909), a handwritten copy of which is held in the archives of King's College at the University of Cambridge. In the essay, Keynes discusses whether it is possible for the rooms within which we live to "suggest to us thoughts and feelings and occupations?"

Wysing's Grade II Listed farmhouse, which was built in the early 17th century reputedly from timbers of ships salvaged from the sinking of the Spanish Armada in 1588, has hosted many hundreds of artists since the organisation was founded twenty five years ago. The farmhouse is where artists live, sleep and eat, and where together they discuss the works that they are developing during residencies and retreats.

Wysing has invited artist Giles Round, working with Wysing Curator Lotte Juul Petersen, to transform the farmhouse into a public space, installing works by a selection of artists who have stayed there over the years and in response to its rooms. A number of the works will remain in the house as a lasting contribution to the site, for future artists to enjoy. All the artists in the exhibition have been in-residence at Wysing over the centre's 25 year history.

To bring the intimacy of the farmhouse into the public realm, a series of dinners, hosted by artists in the exhibition, will make public some of the ideas and discussion that usually takes place in the privacy of the farmhouse. Taking place in Wysing's gallery, the dinners will be devised by the artists and will include events, performances and screenings.



### Event details:



As the first exhibition in our 2014 programme, *Annals of the Twenty-Ninth Century* gives an insight not only into the ambitious work produced at Wysing and where this may lead, but also to the research, discussion and exchange of ideas that take place at our rural site outside Cambridge.

*Annals of the Twenty-Ninth Century* is a group exhibition of newly commissioned work by artists who worked at Wysing during 2013 as part of our artists' residency programme: Anna Barham, James Beckett, Keren Cytter, Cécile B. Evans, Michael Dean, Gustav Metzger, Rupert Norfolk, David Osbaldeston, Seb Patane, Charlotte Prodger and Florian Roithmayr. The exhibition launches our 25th birthday year.

The title of the exhibition is taken from writer Andrew Blair's early 1874 science fiction novel of the same name; a wildly speculative intergalactic future forecast. Although the book's predictions, including the creation of 'a hundred different zoological armies', may now appear wide of the mark, they are a useful indicator of the mores of the time. The text stands in interesting contrast to 2013 Wysing residency artist Gustav Metzger, whose influential writings and activist activities from the 1950's onwards have been prescient of our current concerns. Whereas Blair suggested a driving force for action resulting from passive spiritual change, in Metzger's writing it is dependant on fast, responsive personal decision.

*Annals of the Twenty-Ninth Century* takes Metzger's concerns and influence as a starting point from which to bring work by the other 2013 artists-in-residence together. The exhibition launches a significant year for Wysing, as we mark our 25th birthday. Throughout 2014 our programme will aim to look at the potential of the future through what we know of the past: realised through ongoing residencies, artistic retreats, events, exhibitions and an innovative Futurecamp during the summer of 2014.

# Flash Art



## Colloquio Mitico *Fonti / Napoli*

L'astrattismo ha vissuto costantemente una tensione fra artisti che preferivano evocare uno stato ideale attraverso l'allontanamento dal reale e quelli che, invece, attuavano il percorso d'astrazione tramite una spiccata materialità delle tele o nella ripetizione del tratto.

“Colloquio mitico” sembra scegliere questa seconda strada per presentare un dialogo fra artisti storici e recenti che hanno scelto, chi occasionalmente e chi metodicamente, la grammatica astratta dove la materialità e l'immanente percettivo divengono la necessaria cifra stilistica.

La scultura di *Consagra* del 1959 da cui è tratto il titolo della mostra, esprime il senso di questa mostra collettiva che, attraverso il confronto fra generazioni diverse di artisti, si pone domande più che mai attuali sul significato del gesto e delle scelte formali.

L'artista siciliano, con la celebre “scelta frontale” dettata dal desiderio di dialogo diretto con lo spettatore, ricorda quanto le avanguardie fossero dense di idealismo e di ideologie.

Le sculture in ceramica (*Untitled*, 2012) di Fabian Marti se in parte ricordano i dischi in vinile, in realtà rivelano il movimento che le ha formate l'una diversa dall'altra, così come sono diverse tra loro le dinamiche e le storie che le opere incontrano e le riflessioni che esse generano.

Quindi, il dialogo procede verso *Superficie 535* (1961) di Giuseppe Capogrossi con i suoi celebri segni reiterati, “moduli” di espressione che per la loro riconoscibilità descrivono la storia e la conseguente affermazione di modelli.

Seb Patane con una serie di lavori su lamina di alluminio concretizza in tratto e materia la musica, non dimenticando di mostrarci con i collage gli strumenti con cui la musica vive, mentre i lavori neo-primitivisti, *Untitled* (1970) di Philadelphia Wireman, (artista di cui non si conosce l'identità) azzerano l'autorialità e attestano come necessità sia l'espressione che il confronto con il mondo.

Maria Teresa Annarumma



## GIRLS CAN TELL

28 September 2013 – 02 February 2014

DIRK BELL, JULIETTE BLIGHTMAN, SHANNON BOOL, KAJSA DAHLBERG, NINA HOFFMANN, VERENA ISSEL, MARIA LOBODA, ANNA OSTOYA, MARLO PASCUAL, SEB PATANE, JEREMY SHAW, DIRK STEWEN, SUSANNE M. WINTERLING

Nobody would seriously maintain that feminism's urgent issues have been solved through lived social equality. It could, however, be the case that the focal points of feminism have shifted. What the Feminist Movement in the 1970's and later the Punks in the 1980's fought for has at least in part become a social reality, and that has led to other issues taking centre stage. Accordingly, contact and interaction with early feminists and their doctrines has shifted significantly—for the generations born after 1970, the necessity of constantly standing up for feminist viewpoints has given way to a natural consciousness and to an omnipresent "live with it" feeling. The art theorist Monika Szewczyk speaks of a "profound absorption of those lessons of feminism that allows us to proceed without naming what we do—a pause in the forging of weapons in order to use them." [1]

That in no way means that the social need for a feministic attitude no longer exists today. However, it can be stated that the tone of its expressions has changed. That they have perhaps—should one dare to say—become lighter, without having lost precision. That a tone has been established that is sufficiently sovereign to allow for occasional doubts in feminist doctrines without immediately smelling the scent of treason against its fundamental idea. Moreover we have reached a point where emancipation is no longer an issue for women alone; men are increasingly engaging with issues relating to it.

The group exhibition *Girls Can Tell* [2] displays works by a generation of artists born after 1970 that exemplify the shifted interaction with feminist issues in contemporary art. There are often feminist undertones, and at time feminist issues are expressed subliminally through the use of materials and techniques and employ a certain elegance of form and light aesthetic in order "to use these weapons."

The group exhibition *Girls Can Tell* displays works by a generation of artists born after 1970 that exemplify the shifted interaction with feminist issues in contemporary art. There are often feminist undertones, and at time feminist issues are expressed subliminally through the use of materials and techniques and employ a certain elegance of form and light aesthetic in order "to use these weapons." Approaching this field from diverse perspectives, the works presented in *Girls can tell* traverse a terrain of media which encompasses painting, photography, drawing, installation, ready-made work, film and sculpture.

Juliette Blightman, for example, has cut a grotesque face into the fabric of a petite pink dress with a floral edging, exposing a background that highlights both issues of female adolescence and violence against women. The works of Dirk Bell, Anna Ostoya, Marlo Pascual and Dirk Stewen, meanwhile, focus largely on pictorial issues, while offering subtle perspectives on the question of the place of women in society and art history. Shannon Bool's work oscillates between the contexts of art history and everyday culture, revealing shifts in the social images of women while questioning the validity of motives of desire. Kajsa Dahlberg interviews a feminist activist and translates this negation of classic attributions at a formal level in her elusive images. Nina Hoffmann and Jeremy Shaw question the validity of conventional gender attributions. Maria Loboda presents a seductively attractive bomb, linking her work through its title with images of modern, confident and educated women. Verena Isse's metaphoric images trace the history of female travellers and the challenges faced by women seeking to pursue careers. In an effort to create a visual expression for systems of social repression, Seb Patane represses the thoughts and emotions of Victorian women in a web of black lines. Susanne M. Winterling stages a psychological duel between two different images of women which remains undecided.

*Girls can tell* will be accompanied by an extensive serie of lectures that will reflect the assumption of the exhibition by different perspectives from art history, theorie, or writing (the serie is developed by Yvonne Bialek).

[1] Monika Szewczyk. "A Flirt with Feminism", in exh. cat. Shannon Bool. *Inverted Harem*, CRAC Alsace, GAK Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst Bremen and Bonner Kunstverein, 2011, p. 12.

[2] The title of this exhibition refers to an album by American rock band Spoon from 2001.





## NAPLES

### Seb Patane

GALLERIA FONTI

Anxiety was the theme of Seb Patane's recent exhibition at Galleria Fonti. The show was aptly titled "Abdomen," in reference to the part of the body generally struck by illnesses of emotional and psychological origin, and particularly those traditionally associated with the pathology of hypochondria. Patane's project, inspired by the binaries found at the root of theater (reality and fiction, honesty and dissimulation), was as dense and well-structured on a semantic level as it was radical in formal terms. The presentation was simple: Two installations—one consisting of video and sound, the other composed only of sound—offered a play of verbal and abstract acoustic reflections, through which history and personal experience established a concise, almost symbiotic dialogue.

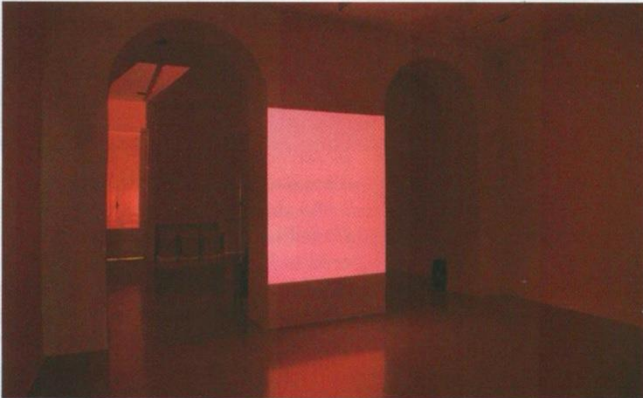
The video installation, *Gustav Metzger as Erwin Piscator, Gera, January 1915*, was displayed in the first room of the gallery, and the sound piece, *Abdomen* (both 2014), was installed so that one could hear both works throughout the space. Transformed into a pseudo-movie theater, the second room was equipped with armchairs, in which visitors could sit to listen to the works. Both pieces were initiated during Patane's residency in October 2013 at the Wysing Arts Centre in Bourn, UK, where he met fellow resident Gustav Metzger. Patane asked Metzger to recite a passage from *The Political Theater*, director Erwin Piscator's 1929 study of the dramatists of the Weimar Republic. The excerpt describes Piscator's memory of the moments before his departure to serve in the military during World War I, and including an account of his poorly tailored uniform, which Patane interprets to reflect the director's disinclination to join his rank.

A recording of this reading underpins both works, but the sound element of *Gustav Metzger as Erwin Piscator*, is accompanied by the monochromatic projection of an intense red color—one that recalls the

viscera suggested by the show's title—onto a central wall. In *Abdomen*, Metzger's telling is followed by a layering of nature sounds recorded in the Cambridgeshire countryside, original music composed by Patane and musician Giancarlo Trimarchi, and artist Cécile B. Evans's delivery of a passage from *The Good Soldier Šveik*, a 1923 novel by Czech satirist Jaroslav Hašek. Concluding the work is a song composed and performed by Patane and musician Andrew Moss, with lyrics that allude to Patane's experiences with hypochondria, some borrowed from the correspondence between the Pre-Raphaelite painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his teacher Ford Madox Brown. In a letter from 1860, Rossetti wrote to Brown of the artist and model Elizabeth Siddal: "I have been . . . in the most agonizing anxiety about poor dear Lizzie's health . . . as she has seemed ready to die daily and more than once a day." Though it's a most inward affliction, anxiety—as Patane's sonic collage demonstrates—is universal in its attacks.

—Pier Paolo Pancotto

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.



View of "Seb Patane,"  
2014-15.

# ARTFORUM

Seb Patane

GALLERIA FONTI  
Via Chiaia 229  
May 23–September 21



*16 Gennaio 1968, 2007*, print on PVC, tape, and enamel, 70 7/8 x 51 1/4".

*“Violenza D’Avanguardia”* (Violence of the Avant-Garde), the title of Seb Patane’s first solo show in Italy, refers to a phrase coined by the founders of Lotta Continua, the far-left political movement that emerged in Italy in the 1970s. References to such sensational events and moments are only one point on the path that connects this artist, now a resident of London, to the country of his birth. Patane extracts photographs from period newspapers and chooses nineteenth-century prints, to which he applies graphic flourishes. As a result, the selected images become vehicles for fresh meanings, as if he were pointing the emotional power of history in new directions. One work shows an enlargement of a newspaper photo of the January 16, 1968, arrest of Luigi Bobbio, one of the founders of Lotta Continua. Patane’s intervention: obscuring Bobbio’s eyes with a simple black strip, in a classic censorship gesture. The act is minimal but surprising. Carried out on such a large-scale photo, the black strip acquires its own specific power, and by rendering the protagonist’s face unrecognizable, Patane’s gesture makes the person under arrest no longer simply Bobbio, but anyone wishing to oppose an unjust system. Off to the side, a group of works of varying dimensions complete Patane’s voyage from past to future. Here, too, a series of transformations of existing images provokes a surprising sequence of effects, which the artist again achieves by overlaying ink or small collages on prints taken from Victorian-era magazines. But this isn’t all. In the second room of the gallery, where there are no works on the walls, the floor-bound *The Guilty Versus Monsieur Carnot*, 2007, stands out. The installation is made from two sheets of medium-density fiberboard that are covered with images taken from album covers and graphic interventions that bring to mind the iconography of war. This work is another allusion to the *Anni di Piombo*, or Years of Lead—the period of terrorism in Italy from the 1970s to the early 1980s—and to the somber fascination with war that Patane cites and then annuls. Meanwhile, a series of loudspeakers hidden in the gallery ceiling explode with the installation sound track that gives the show its title. Among the loudest noises, one can perceive police sirens, gates violently slammed shut, and the din produced by an eruption, transformed into a sequence of electronic sounds.

*Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.*

—*Filippo Romeo*



M. F. *Seb Patane*.

Beck's Futures 2006 Catalogue, April 2006, p39-44.

## SEB PATANE

A passion for contemporary music and its relation to tribal and primordial roots is the foundation of Seb Patane's practice. This set of interests implicitly translates into his series of drawings over fin de siècle newspapers and Victorian magazine pictures. The images that he selects as a support all share an atmosphere, conjuring up highly staged, slightly repressed scenarios. All of them are produced in the early years of mechanic reproduction when photography began experimenting with fabricated images for public consumption. Onto such controlled and artificial representations Patane adds a secondary layer through a calligraphic gesture. The original images serve as a platform for staging the emergence of inorganic forces.

The resulting modified photographs linger between the drive to obliterate information – in particular human faces, the locus of personality in the picture – and the adding of a second-degree meaning to the image. While concealing, Patane duplicates metaphorically the photographic recording: he seems to be interested in 'correcting' the images that he sources, uncovering their occult unregistered side. In this sense, his drawings are investigations into photography as a paranormal recording tool. The marks that he superimposes onto the pictures seem to be transcriptions that emerge from within the images' own unconscious. The same technique is also expanded three-dimensionally in *93 Dead Sunwheels* (2005), a work that transfers the same set of concerns into a more sculptural domain that makes clear reference to music's relation to the primordial and reiterates it in the drawings over two album covers by the esoteric band *Death in June*.

In the installation *Absolute Körperkontrolle* (2006), Patane brings to the fore different strands resonating in his practice. He manages to set up a parallel between mountaineering and marathon dancing as similar enactments of bodily rituals. The work consists of a large picture of a mountain expedition from the beginning of the 20th century and a small vintage image of a couple performing in a dance marathon. In the space between, the artist shows a video re-enacting the different phases of a choreographed performance. Against a white background, two male dancers



M. F. *Seb Patane*.

*Beck's Futures 2006 Catalogue*, April 2006, p.39-44.

dressed up in mountaineer outfits (designed by Patane) perform contrived exhaustion poses to electronic music the artist himself composed. The dancers' bodies convey the same sense of complete control found in the modified Victorian photographs. The artist orchestrates a similar situation of artificial theatricality, combining various elements of self-discipline hinting at a repressive strategy that ultimately aspires to a liberating finale. The title of the piece clearly sums up this strategy in direct homage to the electronic band DAF (Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft), initiators of EBM (electronic body music), whose track *Absolute Körperkontrolle* is also sampled in Patane's musical composition.

The marriage between dance and mountaineering weaves together intricate links to the occult and hints to culturally acceptable manifestations of archaic impulses. Dance marathons and climbing mountains are both self-imposed competitions of extreme endurance, the former echoing a ritual ceremony of shared perseverance, the latter a more metaphysical challenge opposing human will to natural forces. Patane intertwines these aspects through a substantial although not totally overt reference: the image of the mountain is in fact borrowed from the archive of infamous occultist and mountaineer Aleister Crowley whose legacy can be traced through the entire history of experimental music, from legendary bands such as *Throbbing Gristle* and *Led Zeppelin* back to *Kenneth Anger's* seminal films *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954 – 66) and *Thelema Abbey* (1955). Patane's hybrid investigations, as well as his fascination for the uncanny in relation to bodily constrictions, expand on the research undertaken in his drawing, mapping out a larger frame of reference that testifies to the artist's passion for the anthropological paradoxes of contemporary culture. (FM)

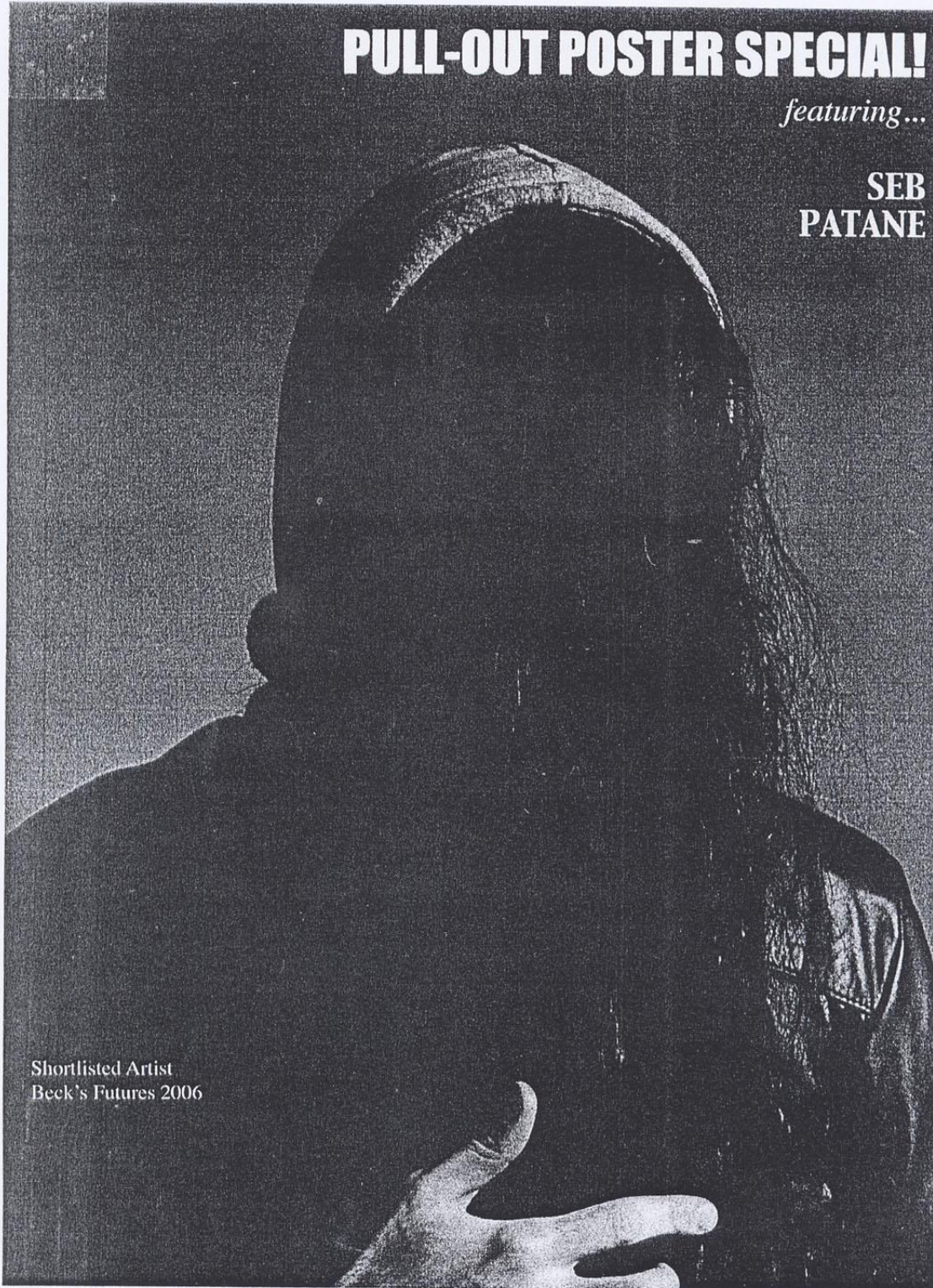


*Pull Out Poster Special,*  
*Super Super, April 2006.*

# **PULL-OUT POSTER SPECIAL!**

*featuring...*

**SEB  
PATANE**



Shortlisted Artist  
Beck's Futures 2006



Pull Out Poster Special,  
Super Super, April 2006.

⊗ SUPER POSTER ART

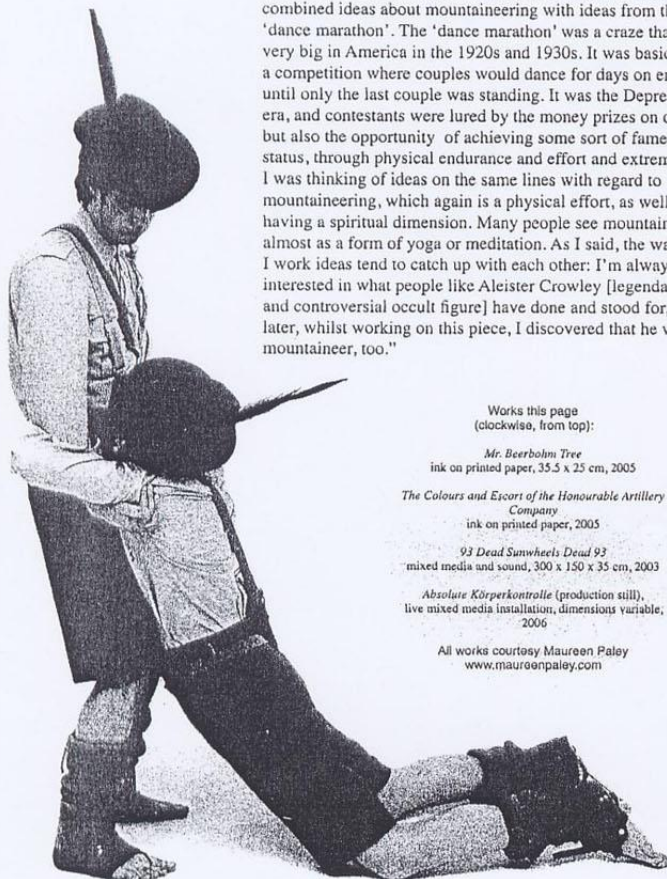
future  
fun

seb patane

It's a good time for artist Seb Patane right now. Major Museums and collectors around the world are fast acquiring his work, he's represented by one of the most respected gallerists in London, Maureen Paley, and now Patane has been nominated for the prestigious Beck's Futures Award, for young artists, opening this month throughout the UK

"I don't think that I can be completely original, and I don't really want to be. I'm not interested in starting with a blank canvas – the idea of the 'artist as genius' doesn't interest me – my work is much more transformative. I want to build up narratives, however dysfunctional they may be, and to give people references in the work that allows them to access this. I like music that refers to other music, for example, and I want to put into visual form what intrigues me in life, my interest in music, film, the things around me, even art. I use references and ideas from things I like and happen across, and from sources I research specifically. The themes intertwine and reappear over time: I like to think of my work as very mixable, where I can take something old and re-use it in a new way, in a new context. Making the work is very much about the edit: It's about making very specific, considered choices: I'm a very specific, considered person!"

"This piece, below left, is a still from a video of a live installation I did recently at the Migros Museum, Zurich, that combined ideas about mountaineering with ideas from the 'dance marathon'. The 'dance marathon' was a craze that was very big in America in the 1920s and 1930s. It was basically a competition where couples would dance for days on end until only the last couple was standing. It was the Depression era, and contestants were lured by the money prizes on offer, but also the opportunity of achieving some sort of fame and status, through physical endurance and effort and extreme. I was thinking of ideas on the same lines with regard to mountaineering, which again is a physical effort, as well as having a spiritual dimension. Many people see mountaineering almost as a form of yoga or meditation. As I said, the way I work ideas tend to catch up with each other: I'm always interested in what people like Aleister Crowley [legendary and controversial occult figure] have done and stood for, and later, whilst working on this piece, I discovered that he was a mountaineer, too."



Works this page  
(clockwise, from top):

Mr. Beerholm Tree  
ink on printed paper, 35.5 x 25 cm, 2005

The Colours and Escort of the Honourable Artillery  
Company  
ink on printed paper, 2005

93 Dead Sunwheels Dead 93  
mixed media and sound, 300 x 150 x 35 cm, 2003

Absolute Körperkontrolle (production still),  
live mixed media installation, dimensions variable,  
2006

All works courtesy Maureen Paley  
www.maureenpaley.com

Seb Patane is showing at Bureau Gallery, Salford, Manchester, March 18th–April 26th [www.bureaugallery.com](http://www.bureaugallery.com)



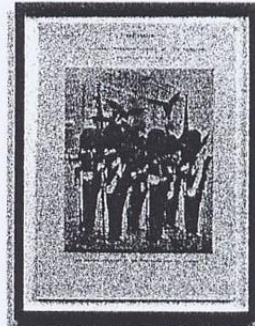
Beck's Futures  
Award 2006:

ICA, London 31st March–14th May  
[www.ica.org.uk](http://www.ica.org.uk)

CCA Glasgow 8th April–14th May  
[www.cca-glasgow.com](http://www.cca-glasgow.com)

Arnolfini, Bristol 13th April–14th May  
[www.arnolfini.org.uk](http://www.arnolfini.org.uk)

From March 31st (ie once you've actually  
seen the work) you can have a say in who  
you think should win this year's prize:  
Visit [www.becksfutures.co.uk](http://www.becksfutures.co.uk)  
for more info



"I get a good response to my drawings, although they are only part of what I do, of course. I see a lot of optimism, a lot of energy in them – growing up I never associated black with negativity. I certainly don't see them as paintings, or feel the need to be wildly experimental with colours; to be honest I don't even see them as drawings, really. I don't do sketches and sketches. It's very much a case of working with the source material, and them making sense in that context."

"i am not  
interested in  
creating something  
completely original;  
I like the viewer to  
have a reference,  
some sort of  
familiarity – then to  
put them in a weird  
confused state"

"I often use sound with my installation pieces, sometimes like another colour, say, to finish the work, while in other pieces it's more important, a key, specific part of the piece. I make the sound with a friend of mine called Loozoo, who understands completely what I want to do. As with my work generally, the sound is about a process and layering ideas together, so you could almost say it's like a bootleg. I use music that I like and listen to anyway, or that I come across in my research. I often use DAF, a German group from the late 70s. They use electronics in a very sharp, pared down, specific way, which is closer to an art making approach. When you transport different mediums into an art context you really need to be specific, to edit it down. Art is much more pared down compared with cinema or music, say."





Wood, Catherine, *She seemed ready to die...*,  
Untitled, February 2005

# SHE SEEMED READY TO DIE DAILY AND MORE THAN ONCE A DAY\*

Catherine Wood on Seb Patane

Seb Patane cites two specific references for his recent drawings: the first was a photograph of a victorious tennis player from a newspaper, found on the London underground, onto which someone had sketched a 'Scream' horror-film mask. The other was the cult horror film, *The Ring* (2002), or its Japanese original *Ringu* (1998), in which subjects become possessed by the content of a video sequence on tape. The film is propelled by a compulsive drive, within the death threat, to transfer possession onto others.

Patane's drawings conflate these notions, of doodled image intervention and compulsion, but he reaches back beyond contemporary pop culture to find sources that are more emblematic. Taking pictures from antique magazines, Patane uses black or blue biro to mine their surfaces (with intense over-drawing) for invisible depths. The biro's roller-balls apply a trail mark of sticky black ink, registering the pressure of Patane's engagement with the surface of the picture. These pictures are always staged and idyllic - often from Victorian London's *The Sketch* magazine. They depict happiness and innocence: women in country landscapes, children playing or lovers embracing on a swing. Patane seems compelled to destroy, by adding to, only the most perfect and fragile images he can find. In *Spring Time* his black pen binds what appears to be two female friends or lover's heads, in an engulfing mass of black hair-like ink drawing that makes ambiguous their embrace. In a piece titled *Scandal*, picturing women chattering over afternoon tea, Patane obliterates the faces and hats of his three lady subjects with similarly intense fine marks. In doing so, the artist obscures the original narrative content of the image leaving us with intriguing gothic blank where a readable story was clearly intended to be. By denying us access to this world, though, such deliberately brutal defacements heighten the viewer's imagining of the romance and preciousness of the original images.

\*Russetti on Lizzie Siddal in a letter to Ford Madox Brown

*Mrs Murray Cookesley's Tableaux at the Crystal Palace, "the Vestal"* elegantly despoils a Victorian engraving featured in *The Sketch* which shows a woman costumed and posed with birds before a painted classical backdrop. The image accompanies a news feature about the then contemporary phenomenon of 'living pictures' - tableaux vivants created by well-to-do ladies as an afternoon diversion. Patane draws onto and darkens the "Vestal's" eye sockets, making them appear hollow, and erases the flock of birds that are posed around her (which we deduce to be stuffed) with black ink transforming them into dark spirits of anti-matter. The picture conflates its ostensible subject - the magic of live presence-as-static image - and the typical posed photograph that appears elsewhere in the magazines pages. Patane's intervention functions both to obscure and heighten the qualities of the original image, making visible an unassailable gap between living self and self-as-image. The photographs and engravings that he selects to work on rely upon slow-exposure photographs or posed scenes requiring unnatural stillness on the part of the sitters, to enable the mechanics of a camera, or an artist, to record the frontal visual plane. Patane's drawings inflect these pictures with awareness of a dimension that is not about stillness and thus eludes capture. In this sense, the *Crystal Palace* tableau, in particular connects with the performance work that Patane makes.

Wood, Catherine, *She seemed ready to die....*  
*Untitled*, February 2005

*The art of the day*



THE DUSTY CONCRETE TABLEAU AT THE CENTRAL PALACE "THE VESTAL"  
BY CATERINE WOOD

*The Vestal*

In his earliest performance pieces Patane created live installations of Vanessa Beecroft-like boys and girls, their skin tones deadened by make-up, dressed in PVC costumes and artificially hued wigs. The models were arranged in energy-drained poses and in some stagings they vomited fluorescent blue or yellow liquid. Despite the liveness of his subjects, the work was shot through with pallid unnaturalness.

His recent performance work transposes the sculptural quality of those early tableaux, and their atmosphere of sick listlessness, into something darker and more virulent. During a performance April 2004, Patane set figures in orange and black hooded costumes on and in-between two wooden crate-like structures. The infectious rhythms of loud techno music filled the space but the performers remained, for the most part, inert.

Occasionally one of them began a slow, deliberate spinning movement - which was not whirling-dervish-like but studied and controlled, with an intensity of focus that gave the effect of sucking energy in to sustain his momentum, rather than expending it. This created a sense that the presented tableau was charged with malevolent potentiality. The performers appeared more as sculpture than as 'live' presence, so this was not the threat of a breakthrough in the audience/performer screen, but rather it was as though the performers were self-sustaining in a curious parallel sphere.

Between his performance works and drawings - as well as the sculpture pieces which incorporate sound - Patane's work subverts visible surface to charge it's appeal, and to allude to a non-visible dimension of ambiguous terror and pleasure. Unlike the tattooed defacements of Dr Lakra, who also draws onto found, historical magazine pictures (though from the 1940s and 50s), Patane's work has a seriousness which does not shift visual codes in any literal way, or satirise his found images as kitsch. Although Patane's work sucks out visual information and corrodes the already fragile picture surfaces, his investment in these pictures derives from a position of fascination and love. Rather than offering any explicit 'alternative' reading of the pictures, as such, his compulsion to cover, and thus reveal, aspects of these images makes them more seductive, and more mysterious.

The ideas of doodling and compulsion with which I began might seem to link Patane's work to a Surrealist conception of automatist expression: the allowing of a repressed subconscious to surface, channelled via the 'involuntary' mark-making of the artist's hand. Patane's drawings and performance in a sense mimic the structure of this concept, but do not indicate belief in its literal narratives of decode-able psychoanalysis. This work does not seem to be concerned with the transformation of consciousness by allowing suppressed matter out, but instead - as was visualised by his performers existing between stasis and movement - with foregrounding the charge which results from setting two unlike states of being, or modes of perception, in dynamic equilibrium.



SEB PATANE

# Playing Hard to Get

Protest music, Gothic Romanticism and urban rumbles  
combine in art that is as elusive as it is beguiling

---

words MARTIN COOMER

**SEB PATANE AND I ARE LISTENING TO A NEW PIECE OF MUSIC** that forms the centerpiece of the exhibition of his work that is currently on view at Tate Britain's Art Now. The commission represents a shift in gear for the Italian-born London-based artist who has gained a reputation over the past few years for installations that ambitiously combine different media and a range of historical sources, but his response hasn't been to scale up or overelaborate. Far from it. The music we're listening to is an exercise in frustration, a perpetual introduction: just as scattered, sampled voices and electronic beats build into thumping 4/4 time, the piece loops back to its sparse beginning.

Patane calls this a protest song of sorts. The third time round I begin to shuffle awkwardly, feeling a little uncomfortable, which in the world of polished surfaces that Patane's work seems initially to inhabit might be regarded as a kind of involuntary bodily dissent. Patane often builds a sense of viewing discomfort into his work. Resting a cool hand on the fiery touchstones of Romantic art and Victorian Gothic, hip bands of yore, as well as images of flareups on the street, he argues for a kind of decorum, an unnerving stillness that scrambles codes as it heightens the aesthetic experience. As well as a protest song, the cauterised soundtrack we're listening to might be thought of as his anthem.

Despite the layered electronica that intermittently blasts the room, nothing much happens either in the 2006 work *Absolute Körperkontrolle*, a version of which Patane presented in that year's Beck's Futures exhibition at the ICA, London. Nonetheless, in this piece a range of thoughts and emotions are provoked by a handful of elegantly arranged elements. There's anticipation encapsulated in a beautifully grainy enlargement on the wall of a vintage photographic image depicting mountaineers dwarfed by their objective. End-of-the-evening enervation is conjured by a smaller photograph on an adjacent wall showing a couple clinging to each other during a dance marathon; though their exhaustion is evident, a denouement – did they win or lose? – is withheld. On video, shown on a small monitor placed on the floor, these images are reinterpreted by Patane as an endurance

embrace, a performance between two young men in lederhosen and fancy feathered hats who stagger a little, their weary, almost somnambulant actions suggestive of a shared secret that seems to shield them, and the work, from interpretation.

To consider the various parts requires both stamina and a certain fleet-footed approach, not just in order to manoeuvre effectively between different media (Patane's installations always comprise a number of bespoke components that might include music, costume, text, appropriated photographic imagery and drawing) but also to channel the different modes of consciousness that each installation transmits. Here, as often occurs in Patane's work, there are leaps through history and between different types of activity. Extreme states – mental and physical – and an erotic undertow thrum or bubble up, but to fully understand the forces at work, Patane seems to suggest, might require a shapeshifting leap into another realm – induced by exertion, sleep, love, drugs or perhaps some other mysterious energy; it's surely not inconsequential that a member of that party photographed on the foothills is none other than occultist Aleister Crowley.

Talking to Patane, the conversation rolls, as pleasant conversations do, picking up layers of reference that at the time seem perfectly rational. Retracing your steps, however, reveals a series of, if not broken, then at times tenuous links that beg the question: 'how on earth did we get to this point?' "[*Absolute Körperkontrolle*] started off with the archive image of Crowley," Patane explains. "At the same time I had the idea of the marathon dance. For me the idea of marathon dancing and mountain climbing makes sense for reasons of spiritual search and enlightenment, so everything eventually came into place with the guys on video dressed up in Alpine costumes and the sound which had very physical and tribal textures to it." While the parts suggest various paths to enlightenment, explanatory tidiness oversimplifies Patane's approach.

"The work often starts to make sense in an unconscious way," he says. "Things seem to throw themselves at me in a sense, and it can be surprising how ideas connect. I can be researching something





and find that it's really connected to something else I'm interested in. I didn't know Crowley was a mountain climber as well as an occultist, for instance. I was drawn to him because he gave mysticism a very strong visual identity; he saw himself as an artist, not just a magician. It's the same with the bands I'm interested in, like Current 93, Death in June... these industrial bands from the early 1980s. I'm interested in what they did because it's so 360 degrees in a way, they really didn't just make music. For them as well, the visual aspect was an important part of the whole project."

Though he admits to feeling suspicious of their iconography, Patane has often quoted these defiantly uneasy-listening bands, which he has been into since his teenage years. The whip-hand motif used by 1980s 'apocalyptic folk' icons Death in June featured as a small part of *Kollapsing New People* (2006), an installation that orbited around ideas of protest and resistance, shown at Maureen Paley Gallery last year. Its starting point was an image of a plainclothes policeman during the 1981 Brixton riot, a photograph that struck Patane as "almost a bit sexy, you know, he's fashionable, with leather jacket and tight jeans. I don't deny that sometimes the attraction is pretty straightforward." Connected to this were images of rioting – including an enlarged photograph of that

staple of the street riot, an upturned, burning van – which in turn led the artist to consider the use of different kinds of noise in experimental music. An arrangement of speakers made loose reference to the noise intoner machines of Italian Futurist composer Luigi Russolo, but somewhere between prop and contemplative object, this remained enigmatic.

A highly stylised spectacle such as this reveals a complicated relationship between the spheres of art and politics. On the one hand, political protest and civil unrest give rise to sensational events and images with obvious appeal to the artist. On the other, when these pictures are edited and confined to the gallery, and coveted by a contemporary art world, their power is altered, the subject matter in one sense becoming ignoble by its transformation into artworld bibelots. Through various distortions and constrictions, Patane dramatises this complication. "Obviously I wouldn't use images that I didn't find attractive in some way," he says. "I'm not setting out to be political. I think it would be a mistake for me to say that. There's a mixture of me researching what images mean and my attraction to them.

"I'm interested in the failure of dissent – I find something quite romantic about it, quite beautiful," he says. The jumping-off point of his







**“I don’t deny that sometimes the attraction is pretty straightforward”**



first exhibition in Italy earlier this year was a photograph of Luigi Bobbio, one of the founders of Lotta Continua, the extreme-left movement of the late 1960s and 70s. Patane enlarged the image of Bobbio, flanked by policemen, and added a thin strip of tape that obscured his eyes. It was a simple gesture, striking as art but deliberately ineffectual as censorship. In his drawings (though he doesn't really think of the activity as such) Patane embellishes a range of photographic imagery, usually sourced from the medium's infancy and often depicting forgotten actresses found in old theatre weeklies such as the *Sketch*. His process is to obscure his subjects' faces by adding blobs of ink that he sometimes teases around the edges into hairy tendrils or feathers, as if the beings were demonic or possessed. This is not done as a gesture of defacement – the results are sometimes mistaken for a Chapman Brothers-esque provocation – but as a kind of rehabilitation. “I guess I believe in the idea that an image can go beyond the meaning that we originally give it, that it can have a second or even a third meaning according to the person's sensibility and their level of interaction.” Through these images, Patane also dabbles in a type of abstraction that, of course, might be regarded as another kind of magic, a means of channelling energies and conjuring states and emotions decipherable to a privileged few.

There are works on paper in his show at Tate Britain, but the focus, along with the sound piece, is a video of a young man juggling fire, another kind of drawing in a darkened space. “You know, at any festival there's always a bunch of people juggling fire,” he says. “They annoy me in a way. But I've always been quite fascinated by them at the same time. Why do they do it? It's really quite beautiful. I like the idea of these people, kids usually, believing that they might challenge authority by introducing this very tribal, performative element.”

What seems important here, as everywhere in Patane's work, is the sense of delay, of anticipation that builds with each revolution. Implicit is a commentary about the difficulties of finding pleasure in political and historical imagery, and presenting the results of lengthy research in aesthetic form. Tacitly acknowledged is the fact that art, as accentuated by a tightly ordered system of gallery display, forever anticipates or succeeds the explosive moment. In Patane's hands, this state becomes hypnotic. •

Art Now: Seb Patane is at Tate Britain, London, until 13 January. See Listings, page 118, for further information

---

WORKS  
(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

***Kollapsing New People*** (detail), 2006  
2 inkjet prints on paper, record sleeve, framed digital c-type print,  
inkjet print on canvas, digital c-type print, wood, MDF, speakers, sound  
dimensions variable

***Razzia***, 2006  
pressed flowers on printed paper  
21 x 28 cm

***Live in Pankow***, 2007  
inkjet print on canvas (82 x 120 cm)  
loudspeaker (10 cm diameter) mounted on MDF  
(100 x 170 x 2 cm approximately)  
courtesy Maureen Paley, London, and Rec., Berlin

***Kollapsing New People*** (detail), 2006  
2 inkjet prints on paper, record sleeve, framed digital c-type print,  
inkjet print on canvas, digital c-type print, wood, MDF, speakers, sound  
dimensions variable.

all images courtesy Maureen Paley, London



# Seb Patane

## CHAIN REACTION

Catherine Wood

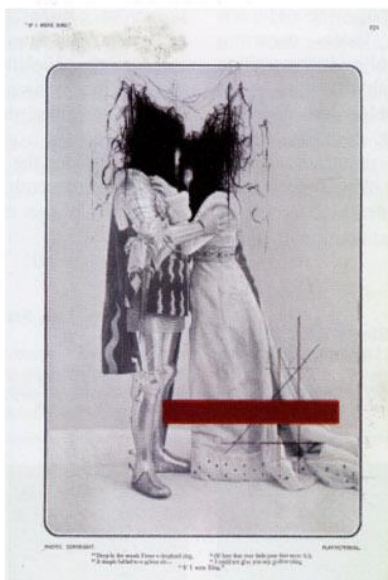
**CATHERINE WOOD:** *Your recent work refers to or features images of men from political organizations in the '60s and '70s (such as Lotta Continua). What is it about those groups, and the images they created, that you would have seen in the media that attracted you to appropriating them?*

**Seb Patane:** What attracts me about these organizations is their conscious decision to operate in a political field yet using a strong visual component. The Lotta Continua founders for instance described their modus operandi as 'violenza d'avanguardia' (violence of the avant-garde) thus lining themselves along ideas of a specific kind of performativity. They had a definite visual identity that they exploited to achieve their extreme political goals. Some of these images eventually became historically iconic, for instance the image of Italian politician Aldo Moro, kidnapped by the Red Brigades and photographed in front of a banner depicting a pentagram, a symbol they had adopted. It is an image that is burnt forever into my subconsciousness and I am sure in that of many Italians.

**CW:** *How does the 'aesthetic' aspect of those protest movements relate to your practice as an artist?*

**SP:** It's an appropriation that I like to make in order to suggest ideas that question the power of so-called political artwork. Some of the kind of visual choices adopted by those protest groups like banners or the use of what I call anti-portrait seemed to relate to issues I am somehow trying to address myself in some of my pieces. To be precise, I never really set up to be explicitly political, in fact my approach to those issues is almost one of a 'lazy learner.' Through researching the visual iconography of those revolutionary years, I started getting closer to the motivations behind the need to make work, or indeed to propose a social statement that is trying to convey some sort of message, however successful or unsuccessful or constructive or destructive that very message may end up being.

**CW:** *What is your relationship to the photographic image? You often use historic images and manipulate or obliterate them in some way, as though there's a sense of violence towards them, that you feel compelled to partially destroy them?*



Deep in the woods I hear a shepherd sing, 2008. Ballpoint pen, enamel and colored pencil on printed paper, 29 x 21 cm. Opposite: installation view at Tate Britain, London 2008. All images, courtesy Maureen Paley, London.

**SP:** My initial attraction to these pictures is usually pretty visceral; what I mean is that I experience a kind of transport that is almost like a gut reaction. I suppose one could also say that there is already some kind of violence inherent in that relationship, but it's more like my consciousness has been contaminated by that image. Eventually, my interaction with those images is in fact an act of respect rather than subversion, but it feels like that as a reaction to that psychological violence the outcome ends up looking like a need for abstracted concealment of some sort, almost to balance out that sense of devotion towards the image. It's a game of contradictions.

**CW:** *Is there any parallel between how you see the use of these 'out of control' aspects such as the black biro effacements in the earlier drawings or the 'censored' marks in recent pictures with the introduction of music into the space?*

**SP:** I guess it's like a chain reaction. Because

I often work within a very rigid framework — you know, the MDF panels, the tight spatial arrangements, the sparse feel of most of the installations — I eventually feel compelled to give things a different dynamic by introducing for instance sound, which by definition is intangible therefore volatile and more anarchic. Ironically I have ended up introducing that kind of censorship iconography you mentioned just to balance that in turn; the earlier drawings feel very organic and disordered, which coincidentally is a dynamic that seem to address a specific relation between anarchy and the organic described in some '60s theories that I am reading about at the moment. But the censorship images have a sense of enclosed frustration about them... so it's almost like a circle, starting with a very definite image that gets interfered with freely, then gets straightened out a bit... a constant shift.

**CW:** *You ran a unique nightclub event called "Nerd" for some years, it seemed to me very much a part of your art practice in the way that it created a space for participation and performance by both artists and club-goers who were involved, with events such as Spartacus (formerly Lali) Chetwynd's performance Thriller or artist DJs.*

*How was the creation of this social space for performing certain alternative identities related to the depiction of political movements in your work?*

**SP:** "Nerd" felt like some sort of best kept secret. People who came made it their own and always used to say to me how much they enjoyed that feeling of community and exclusivity. There was something unique about the feeling that within that container anything could have happened, like when Spartacus proposed to perform her *Thriller* piece. That night at one particular point we filled the room with fake smoke and 'zombies' started appearing from all angles; people had absolutely no idea that this was going to happen so it felt really anarchic and out of control. I guess alternative political movements retain a similar agenda, like that uncontrollable, exhilarating feeling you get when you feel like you may be able to change the world, if only for a minute.

**CW:** *Is there a link between your interest in contemporary subcultural 'style' and the secret/coded nature of these operations historically?*

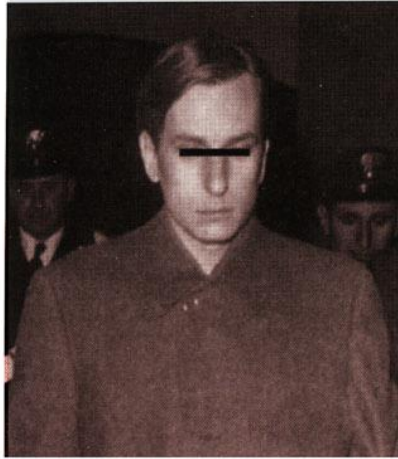


Wood, Catherine, *Seb Patane: Chain Reaction*,  
*Flash Art*, March 2009, pp.72-74.





Wood, Catherine, *Seb Patane: Chain Reaction*, *Flash Art*, March 2009, pp.72-74.



**SP:** I see those subcultures like providing society with something akin to an ongoing durational performance. It's almost like secret agents, hidden performers acting within crowds to achieve a subtle sense of displacement. When I think about these ideas of rebellion, protest and revolution I actually never think about loud fights or violent wars, it's more like a quiet but incisive time-based infiltration of consciousness.

**CW:** Could you say something about the 'chain of references' that links different aspects of your work in the last 5 years, and how you decide upon the found material that you appropriate?

**SP:** Well it all happens organically. I think it's all part of the subconscious, of which I am a great believer. Although my work may appear aesthetically as very thought through, in fact most times I act in a very instinctive way. True, eventually this instinct is usually filtered very carefully but I am surprised as much as any viewer on how different aspects of the work end up relating to each other. I don't set myself up to do only work that requires a found object, but sometimes I feel like we are inundated with so much visual stimuli that it's almost a pollution of the eye. So I feel more inclined on re-using a great image that has been discarded or overlooked, almost as to give it a second chance.

**CW:** Do the simple geometric MDF structures that 'stage' the mise-en-scène of your installations have a relationship to minimalism, to Robert Morris for example? Do you intend a relationship to the physical presence of the viewer?

**SP:** No, I don't feel there really are specific references to any particular artist, or not in the fine art area anyhow. At some stage in my practice I felt like I needed more solid structures to enable me to play around with the elements of my installations like the prints on canvas or the sound loops, so I started devising these simple MDF constructions that are just that tiny bit askew so don't end up being too rigid. Because of my interest in theater design they

are arranged almost as to enact the viewers to perform within them, by marginally negotiating their physical interaction around them. But again, it's a combination of the rigid with the unrefined that interests me and that I hope will create an interesting tension in the work.

**CW:** How does the mise-en-scène of the gallery installation relate to the drawn tableaux from Victorian theater magazines with which you have been fascinated, such as *The Sketch*? Is there an interest in the fictional potential offered by the space of theater? How is that grafted with your political interests?

**SP:** I guess it's the potential in believing in ideas of 'fakeness' that I am fascinated by, a bit like theatrical or cinematic notions of 'suspension of disbelief.' As an artist, I try and put a lot of trust in the power of the image, which again is what a lot of political movements, especially those satellite ones, wanted to exploit. My installations retain a rough if minimal theatrical aspect that leaves them vulnerable and therefore open to tougher inspection. In a similar way, we can nowadays look at those aged images and interact with a contemporary knowledge that will challenge, in good and bad ways, the importance and validity of such images. I like to think that fictional narrative can be a very powerful tool indeed, as it has the potential for real subversion; as viewers of anything visual we are put in a position to question reality, and that fragile moment when we doubt realness can be a very inspiring one indeed.

**CW:** There appears to be a 'gothic' aspect to the relationship between nature and culture, 'live' performance and sculptural 'deadness' and the uncanny quality of your biro drawings/ spinning figures in performance?

**SP:** What interested me for instance in the Victorian images was the sense of passivity that they retained, which I felt I was trying to challenge by introducing those automatic-like drawing interventions. What I like is the idea that fiction can interfere with reality, the 'blur-

From top left: 16 Gennaio 1968, 2007. Inkjet print on PVC, tape, 180 x 130 cm. Courtesy Maureen Paley, London and Galleria Fonti, Naples; Decelerated Montage for the Good War, 2008. Mixed media. Courtesy China Art Objects, Los Angeles and Maureen Paley, London.

ring of art and life' if you like; psychologically there is something terrifying about the idea of the inanimate that then comes to life, which I guess is where a lot of theories about the gothic converge. I am attracted to the potential for a change in dynamic in anything that has a 'live' potential but that also poses itself as lifeless, however small and almost imperceptible that change may appear to be.

**CW:** Which artists historically have been important to you?

**SP:** Although I have artists who I admire I'm usually more likely to refer to creative people who act at the margin of the so-called fine art area. So I am more inspired by musicians like Coil or Current 93, or by all-round artistic figures like Alejandro Jodorowsky. I like how these people have a broad approach to the overall creation of a project, be it a record, or book, or film. It feels like the meaning behind their work can be transmitted via different levels, of which only one happens to be visual; I guess it's again a bit like what those political movements we discussed earlier felt they were doing. ■

Catherine Wood is curator at Tate Modern, London.

Seb Patane was born in Catania, Italy, in 1970. He lives and works in London.

Selected solo shows: 2009: Maureen Paley, London. 2008: China Art Objects Galleries, Los Angeles. 2007: Tate Britain, London; REC., Berlin; Fonti, Naples. 2006: Bureau, Manchester; 2004: Lawrence O'Hana, London.

Selected group shows: 2008: "Wunderkammer: A Century of Curiosities," MoMA, New York; "Archeology of Mind," Malmö Art Museum; "Yours Mine Ours, University of Essex," Colchester, UK; 2007: "Salon Nouveau," Engholm Engelhorn, Vienna; 2006: "While Interwoven Echoes Drip Into A Hybrid Body," Migros Museum, Zurich. 2005: Prague Biennial 2. 2004: "The Black Album," Maureen Paley, London.



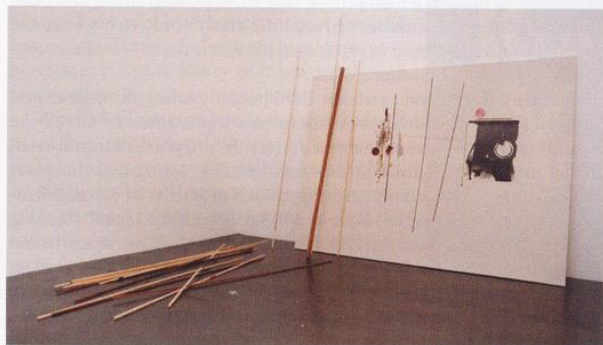
## LOS ANGELES

### Seb Patane

#### CHINA ART OBJECTS

At the heart of Seb Patane's tight, studied exhibition is its namesake, a hypnotic video titled *Year of the Corn*, 2011. The time-based composition has a trancelike, vaguely tribal sound component and sets into action the many static expressions visible in the artist's drawings, paintings, collages, prints, and sculptures elsewhere in the room. Over the course of six minutes, the piece shifts through five distinct movements: a dark silhouette (a head? a landscape?) floating static against a pixelated red sky; two planes of latticework spinning laterally; a strangely ritualistic performance shot in black and white played forward and back; two masked bodies superimposed against a bamboo forest; and a point-of-view tracking shot retreating from a deserted shack. In this final section, a muffled voice can faintly be heard reading a poem written by the artist; a text pasted to a wall adjacent to the projection echoing the voice-over, "We were faithful to the line; faithful, to the straight line. . . ."

The structure of this video is peculiar in that while it is both nonnarrative and looped, it is also clearly linear, its successive patterning moving steadily from scene A, to B, to C, and so on, before ultimately returning to A and starting again while lyrically unfolding indeterminately outward. Such opposition between a line and a loop proves to be an unpretentious formal device, which Patane extended to the other works in this show. For example, in *Eleventh to the North*, 2011, similar formal dualisms are sculpturally and pictorially addressed. Leaning a ten-foot-long unprimed canvas against the wall, Patane then dropped before it a pile of thin wooden poles marked with bands of colored tape; four more poles lean against the canvas, reiterating and buttressing the dominant works rendered in acrylic on the flat surface. In between these two- and three-dimensional lines, the work is further embellished with an explosion of tiny geometries, organic patterns of ballpoint pen, and symbols and fragmented text drawn in colored pencil.



Seb Patane, *Eleventh to the North*, 2011, acrylic, ballpoint pen, and colored pencil on canvas, wood, and tape, 90 x 120".

Patane easily shifts between painting and sculpture, conflating pictorial space with physical presence and addressing an object as he might regard a painting. In *Helmetbretic Telepathycal*, 2011, a large free-standing wooden structure installed in the gallery's main space, Patane seems to question where the "face" of both a sculpture and painting might be. Oriented toward a back wall, the sculpture revealed a small artwork secured by its open-frame structure: an abstract painting collaged with printed paper and leather and set behind glass. The orientation of this flat work was frontal in relation to its sculptural superstructure, but the sculpture seemed backward, with the reverse of the painting's frame facing the entryway. Thus, the viewer was forced to perambulate the sculpture to view the front of both pieces.

In what might be taken as a parallel gesture, when Patane turns toward the figurative—whether in collages that incorporate found photos or in prints that purport to be self-portraits—he nearly always obscures the face of his subject. Even the short clip used in his video—lifted from Peter Sykes's 1968 cult film *The Committee*—depicts a man wearing an elaborate headdress that covers much of his face. These instances of the artist literally defacing a body, while reading as easy attempts at the erasure of identity, are yet another move in the gamelike systems that the artist contrives. And how the viewer figures into these riddles may actually be where we locate the face value of Patane's not-so-faithfully "straight" meanings.

—Catherine Taft



Young, Rob, *Cross Platform, Sound in other media*,  
*Wire*, August 2011, p.18.

## Cross Platform

Sound in other media

Italian multi-artist

### Seb Patane

stays faithful to the straight lines that connect and divide people and places, politics and culture, sound and music.

By Rob Young



Seb Patane *Absolute Körperkontrolle* (2006)

**As a young man**, Mexican film maker Alejandro Jodorowsky devised a plan to plot a straight line through a local village and walk along it. If this entailed barging through people's homes, over roofs or tramping through their gardens, so be it. Faithfulness to the line, persistence, was all. It's an art action admired by Italian multi-artist Seb Patane. "My interest is in the will to conquest," he says, "to achieve an aim no matter what, and in the passion for the act of what gets called 'performance'. This image [of Jodorowsky] always struck a chord with me; I like it not only as a very visual, surreal image, with an interesting crossover between performance and architecture, but also as a metaphor with ambiguous meanings, or even with political connotations that can be seen as provocative. In the 80s there was also an Italian proto-Soviet punk band called CCCP Fedeli Alla Linea (Faithful To The Line)..."

Patane, a Sicilian living and working in London since 1992, recites the phrase "faithful to the line" down a telephone in *Year Of The Corn* (2011), a short film made for his current exhibition in Mulhouse, France. He works across a variety of media, including installations involving sculptural and sound elements (such as the 'living sculpture' *Absolute Körperkontrolle*); film and electronic music. Acknowledging the influence of Coil, Current 93 and contemporary electronica, he produces his own music as part of the duo Frontier, Frontier! with Giancarlo Trimarchi, although they haven't done much of late. "Frontier, Frontier! is an ongoing project which still exists," insists Patane, "although because of work commitments Giancarlo and I haven't been able to work together in the last two years or so. I am now mostly concentrating on composing tracks on my own, or with Marco Pianges, who collaborated on the sound for *Year Of The Corn*." Pianges and Patane's newest effort, *A Series Of Graceful Juggling Tricks (Part IV)*, will be presented at London's ICA next month.

In *Year Of The Corn*, over a black screen, sounds accrete: birdsong and the rural outdoors; a creaky watermill; a glimmering windchime, and the ringing of a vintage bell telephone. Spinning cobwebs of ruled lines and diagrams appear, as an electronic rhythm kicks off. This is succeeded by a short sample of black

and white footage of countercultural shaman Arthur Brown, a supercharged alien presence cavorting around a private party wearing a flaming headpiece. The soundtrack subliminally morphs back to birdsong, digitally enhanced, and the scene changes to a field of reeds glinting in sunlight, superimposed with engravings of huntsmen from the 18th or 19th century. Finally, as Patane's hand-held camera retreats from one corner of a field, it reveals a rough track parallel to a line of trees. The film meditates upon a series of thresholds, crossings and retreats; persistence and resistance in a constant dialogue.

"*Year Of The Corn* is influenced by ideas of disrupted narrative, rhythm and the difficulty of collapsing dreams, reality, memory, past and present together," Patane says. "The clip with Arthur Brown is from *The Committee* by Peter Sykes, from 1968. I was fascinated by how Brown interrupts a seemingly polite event, by disrupting the order with his dramatic entrance, the fire also representing an organic, out-of-control element. The film is a surreal exercise in some sort of utopian philosophy, that scene being the only dynamic one in an otherwise pretty slow movie."

Such interventions are a core element of Patane's visual work, which consists of altering and defacing found images. These intrusions are about problematizing and muddying the waters rather than clarification, which extends into his other musical work. Anyone listening to his sound pieces *Violenzia D'Avanguardia* and *So This Song Kills Fascists* (both 2007) might expect, from their titles, a music of disruptive, convulsive urgency. They are Pansonic-like assemblages of electronic beats and drum samples, but instead of the frantic bpm's of club music, they are arranged in patterns suggestive of stuttering, indecision, even stasis. The point of a protest song is not to luxuriate in aural textures, but to abandon listening and tackle the problem. But Patane's 'protest' pieces resound in reverbed space, which amplifies the sense of an empty chamber where no one is listening. The tracks are protests with their eyes masked out, like one of Patane's altered postcards.

Patane is interested in what happens to extreme political ideas when direct action is substituted by

songs or artworks. "I'm interested in the potential or failure of such mediations," he says, "and it intrigues me that strong ideas could be presented through the 'embellishment' of an artistic medium."

Patane has spoken of the "failure of dissent" – that direct action is, on the whole, spectacular but ultimately impotent. In the example and activities of Lotta Continua, the 1970s hard left Italian political cell, he sees a different order of revolutionary proposal: change that unfolds through the slow drip of actions, propaganda, protest, publishing, demonstration, private debate, in an underground, unofficial knowledge economy. Political collectives such as these operated in a way which directly mirrors Patane's own comments about sound: that it is "volatile", "anarchic" and exerts a "time-based infiltration of consciousness".

*400 Sonnets In Reverse, Together*, the piece of music that names Patane's Mulhouse exhibition, takes its title from a line in Broadcast's "The Be Colony". The album where the track is located, *Broadcast & The Focus Group Investigate Witch Cults Of The Radio Age* (2009) can be seen as an epitaph for singer Trish Keenan, who died in early 2011. It shares a certain sonic density with the later Broadcast work, laden with destabilising dub and echo effects. "I've done it using a super-lo-fi, quasi-analogue recording process, literally layering samples and home recordings done on my Mac," he explains. "It has a murky quality and chaotic 'structure' compared to the other stuff. Broadcast have always inspired me for their vision of transformative psychedelia, and that album was for me crucial in making me think about the idea of sonic interferences and interventions on the environment. Buried beneath layers, somewhere in the piece is my voice, heavily treated, singing that line over and over."

"The death of Trish Keenan, although I didn't know her personally, has affected me profoundly, as I have been a fan of the band since the very first days. I consider it to be almost some sort of personal, quiet tribute to them and Trish in particular." □ 400 Sonnets In Reverse, Together runs to 28 August at La Kunsthalle, Mulhouse, France. An artist monograph edited by Bettina Steinbrügge is published by Distanz