

On Saturday **18 June 2005, at 5:30 p.m.**, the **CACT Centre of contemporary Art in Canton Ticino** in Bellinzona will host the inauguration of a thematic exhibition entitled

LE VANITÀ DELL'UCCELLO IN GABBIA / THE VANITIES OF THE CAGED BIRD

Alex Hanimann, Federica Marangoni, Damir Nikšić, Scott Treleaven

The title was inspired by an installation created by Alex Hanimann in 2004 for the Kunsthalle in St. Gallen, comprising an enormous birdcage (made of wooden walls and netting) assembled inside the museum and divided into four communicating sections, each in a colour of its own. The cage contained canaries and other birds that were free to move around as they chose between the various sections, probably encouraged by the visual pleasure they took in the colours. Despite this apparent freedom of movement, though, the birds were unfortunately caged.

It was this description that spawned some interesting thinking about society, not just in the present day, and about the freedoms conceded to man in relation to his visions and his own individual identity. Utopias – the hope that our dreams will come true – are included in the universe of the things we can describe as “vanities”. But we are – unfortunately – incapable of going beyond the netting.

The work by **Alex Hanimann** (Switzerland, 1955) presented here is one of the videos (2003_2004) shot in the St. Gallen installation.

Federica Marangoni (Italy, 1940) is presenting installation works whose outlines can be traced back to the special relationship between art and architecture, summarised here as a sign in a space. F.M.'s works belong to a larger project on a larger scale with the evocative and/or polemic title of ***TOLERANCE-IN-TOLERANCE*** (2002-2005), which derives from the assembly of a hundred images taken from everyday journalist reports and completed by a series of object works with a particularly participatory pertinence to the narrative, such as barbed wire, neon writing, sharp materials like glass and other media that underscore the thematic meaning of the work. By appropriating the more performance-oriented aspects of art, F.M.'s work reflects the artist's considerable personal expressiveness, advancing in parallel with it.

Anatomy of Exodus (2005) is a recent video work by the Chicago-based artist **Damir Nikšić** (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1970). Presented on a flat screen, this video is a reflection on the interpretation of the concept of Orient by the Occident and an evident critique of the false but widespread idea of “Orientalism”. Working against a black cross-hatched background intended to refer to the first attempts made by Eadweard Muybridge to approximate movement, using pioneering photography, D.N. has filmed himself dressed as a nineteenth century Moslem. The author/actor tackles an exodus, a departure from a reality hostile to him and, despite walking long and continuously, his wanderings are in vain.

Still very young, yet expressively and iconographically highly talented, **Scott Treleaven** (Canada, 1972) is showing two video works ***THE SALIVATION ARMY*** (2002) and ***Beastboy*** (2002). Already presented previously at *Art/35/Basel*, in the Film section, ***THE SALIVATION ARMY*** is a video narrative projected onto the screen that summarises brilliantly – with skilled, coherent editing – the *Queer Punk* culture, which it interprets intelligently and militantly.

Beastboy, in addition, is a work that turns out to be an almost silent icon of a video; it represents man's metamorphic fusion with the animal universe of the passions.

Psychedelic in approach and related to video clips, but also to the practice of historical quotations, S.T. manages poetically to illustrate some sometimes thorny topics with such poetry as to make the act of watching extremely pleasant. Concealed behind an apparently cold, hard hermeticism, S.T. expresses those mystical, visionary and counter-culture aspects, attitudes of resistance and anarchy, that are necessary for the world to be transformed into Utopia.

The exhibition is open to the public **from Friday to Sunday, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.** and will remain open until **14 August 2005**.

(Translation: Pete Kercher)