

For Immediate Release:
Contact 886 Geary Gallery - Art Poesia
art@886geary.com

8 8 6 G e a r y G a l l e r y p r e s e n t s :

N o t h i n g t o S a y

A S o l o e x h i b i t i o n b y F i l i p p o M i n e l l i



886 Geary Gallery is pleased to present ***Nothing to Say***, a solo exhibition by Filippo Minelli. The opening reception will be Saturday, January 10th, from 7-11 pm, and the exhibition is free and open to the public for viewing through February 7, 2014.

Nothing to Say will be the artist **Filippo Minelli's first solo exhibition in the United States** as well as showcase recent work during his travels in California. Minelli initiated his series of work titled Silence/Shapes in 2009 inspired by political demonstrations, with the aim of visualizing silence as a physical shape in the landscape by decontextualizing the violent media of smoke grenades and juxtaposing it to the beauty of nature.

Having produced numerous interventions across Europe, Asia, Africa, and now the US, the artist will focus the exhibition on a series of recent works, most of them created in various areas throughout California specifically for this show. Working in residence as well as traveling the artist will utilize this experience to exhibit for 886 Geary's Inaugural exhibition.

A b o u t T h e A r t i s t

Filippo Minelli (b. 1983) is a contemporary artist from Italy working within a variety of media, such as interventions in public space, as well as photographs and painting. He received his BFA in Arts and New Media and graduated with honors from the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan, Italy.

His work was shown at international Photography festivals from Rome to Singapore to Paraty (BR), at Venice Biennale 2011 and published in the New York Times, le Monde, and Sueddeutsche Zeitung.

From Europe to South East Asia, the Mongolian steppe to African deserts, passing by the green line between Palestine and Israel, Minelli has created public art with the support of institutions and residency programs as well as independently. His artistic path, through the use of language, led him to investigate the importance of the word in contemporaneity, as well as its opposite, silence, visualized through photography in the public performances of his 'Silence/Shapes' series.

Recently philosopher Santiago Zabala wrote an essay about Minelli's work which was published in The New York Times, and an overview of his works was published in a monograph by Onomatopee (The Netherlands) at the beginning of the year.

A b o u t S i l e n c e / S h a p e s

In the works of the series 'Silence/Shapes', commenced in 2009, the artistic research of Filippo Minelli has reached a high degree of synthesis and concentration that combines mastery of the aesthetic codes with language awareness and the ability to express complex content in a mediated way, through a dialectical perspective in permanent balance between transparency and opacity.

Starting from the observation on a purely descriptive level, these photographic artworks present themselves as natural landscapes or industrial archaeology in which we see "exploded" and spreading coloured smoke substances, jarring both thematically and visually with the context and the setting. There is no fortuity, nor documentary intent, but everything is built and composed with extreme attention given to formal and technical qualities.

The reading levels are varied: the one by Minelli is an art of stratified density which does not give up either the aesthetic message, or the transmission of conceptual meanings, multiple, multifaceted and intersecting each other.

The use of smoke bomb devices probably arose from the interest of the author for social and political issues: often used in protests, they generally refer to the imagery of the mass, of bustle, shouting and noise, maybe even violence. But of all this, only one single element remains in the photographs of Minelli, an element that escapes the primary scope of common experience and of its "utilitarian function" to enter the ranks and the modality of what Nathalie Heinich defines in her essay *The Sociology of Art* as 'objects de regard' or – translated somewhat summary – "objects of the gaze" (a gaze aesthetically addressed, of course). The result is alienating, both at the level of pure visual perception and on the semantic level;

Russian formalists would have spoken about disorientation or de- familiarization.

The procedure itself involves the emphasis of a specific content, which perhaps is not obvious at the beginning, but gradually emerges in all its different meanings: in *Silence/Shapes* Minelli is staging an 'occurrence' that is not natural or spontaneous but put in place by invisible hands so that the author of the action does not appear and remains undetermined. On the one hand the alienation of coloured smoke in a solitary place, on the other hand the mechanism of the event originated almost 'by parthenogenesis' (as an effect without a cause), both help to overcome – and help the observer to overcome – the neutrality of the vision and to induce a mental circuit of new signification of the perceptual datum.

Although in the end there is a kind of 'story', it is not about narrative art, and even less public art, even though it was – and is – practiced by Minelli in his other important and lucky work cycles, for example those dedicated to the analysis of urban communication or geopolitical phenomena. If the goal is always to decipher the reality working on the language (sometimes verbal, sometimes formal- iconic), in *Silence/Shapes* it is as if the research has undergone a process of internalization, or rather, sublimation. The noise of the world fades away to make room for a silence, suspended and amazed; an absence, deaf and precipitated, comparable to the sudden vacuum that is created in certain cinematic sequences (think of Kurosawa) when a particularly excited and loud scene is suddenly cut out of sound. The effect is powerful and not at all reassuring, amplifying the impact of the vision instead and urging us, among other things, to consider that while we are immersed in deafening shouts and obsessive information 'around the clock', a mysterious pink smoke that explodes without sound in a snowy plain, perhaps acquires greater significance than a news story released at full gallop by the media with a profusion of words, images, information and reviews.

The colourful clouds that hover in the air in the photographs by Filippo Minelli also assume the aspect of apparitions, and not surprisingly some critics have interpreted their possible implications in the spiritual and religious meaning: a hermeneutic perspective that is certainly legitimate, and the suggestion of 'sacredness' that flows from such visions is undeniable as it expresses a sense of immanence of mystery, perceptible manifestation – albeit immaterial – of a force inexplicable and occult. However, I will not insist too much on reading *Silence/Shapes* in mystical terms, since, even if that dimension is present, to me it seems overtaken by more different connotations. First, Minelli's unexpected landing to a modern form of aesthetics of the sublime: the contemplatively established relationship with the landscape.

In the love for abandoned places, the exaltation of the irrational element and the clear research of natural and visionary beauty there is definitely a track of rethinking some of the most typical categories of German and British Romanticism of the early nineteenth century (reincarnated, obviously) with a contemporary sensibility that considers these categories "from the outside" with awareness and historical perspective, and relativizes them, puts them in quotation marks, thus being able to join them without indulging in naivety or in anachronisms.

Last but not least, we must reflect on the many synergetic reverberations of the *Silence/Shapes* series, and on the trans-medial character of Minelli's operation: highlighting the temporal theme of 'silence' in a work relating to the sphere of spatial arts, clearly reveals the intention of breaking the disciplinary statutes. Although the idea of "representing" sound would

already go in this direction, it appears an even more destabilizing gesture to try to give shape to its absence: how can we make visible what is not even audible, as a deprivation of each acoustic stimulus? The conceptual challenge, in short, runs along the edge of the paradox, and if the goal of Richard Wagner was for time to become space ('Zum Raum wird hier die Zeit', sings the old Knight of the Grail in Parsifal), in the photographs of Minelli it is silence that becomes a physical shape transforming itself into space: physical and mental presence, to contemplate and perhaps explore.

Paolo Bolpagni, Fundación Loewe Madrid, 23 January 2014

A b o u t T h e G a l l e r y

886 Geary Gallery is a urban and contemporary art hub based in San Francisco. Combined with sister space White Walls Gallery and 4 project spaces, our state of the art 5,000 square foot space is one of the largest galleries on the west coast.

Poesia, main curator of **886 Geary Gallery**, has worked as an artist for over 2 decades in the San Francisco Bay Area and over the past 5 years curated multiple exhibitions internationally. Having started the internationally recognized website Graffuturism.com as well as Graffuturism Movement in 2010, he has now focused his attention to curating and bringing emerging artists to San Francisco.

886 Geary is the curator's newest project and venture into the commercial gallery space. Poesia will continue to bring artists from around the world to San Francisco and establish 886 Geary Gallery as the premiere destination of urban and contemporary art in the San Francisco Bay Area.

M e d i a O p p o r t u n i t i e s

Interview with the artist

High-resolution images available upon request

E v e n t I n f o r m a t i o n

Filippo Minelli Solo Exhibition

Nothing to Say

Opening Reception – January 10, 2015, 7-11 pm

On View Through February 7, 2015

@886Geary (www.886geary.com)

886 Geary Street

San Francisco, CA 94109

408.805.5626