

ArtForum

Galleria gian carla zanutti: Davide Bertocchi. (Reviews).

ArtForum , Summer, 2001, by [Giorgio Verzotti](#)

The three works Davide Bertocchi presented here were each quite different but were subtly linked by an idea. In the gallery's single room, what first struck the viewer was Nucleo (Nucleus; all works 2000), a large sphere in dark fiberglass-reinforced plastic. On its surface, at eye level, was a hole large enough to accommodate the viewer's head.

The interior of the sphere was completely dark, and this "portable abyss" (the artist's own words) could be experienced as long as one remained silent. As soon as there was any sound, a distinct echo reverberated, due to an acoustical device inserted within the sphere. Thus the abyss became animated, artificially but--and precisely because of this artificiality--in highly suggestive fashion. Orbite (Orbits), on the back wall of the space, was formed by the projection of four laser beams. If projected in isolation, each ray would have described a stable figure in the form of a perfectly symmetrical arabesque. But the superimposition implied figures in continuous motion, resulting in a protean organism in a perennial state of becoming.

The third work, Propulsori (Propellers), consisted of ten photographs illustrating the artist's attempts to construct a perpetual-motion mechanism. The photographs showed two burners linked to each other by a metal axle and placed atop a tripod. The flames from the burners, fed by fuel, pushed the axle to rotate, like an action resulting from two opposing thrusts.

The mechanism was deliberately rough-looking, and the artist's intent ironic, with the whole setup suggesting a useless, antieconomic activity, based on pure expenditure. And this is the idea that ties together the three works in the show: their presentation as Duchampian bachelor machines--their tendency toward entropy and thus their metaphorical proposition as devices that point to a hidden or negative dimension of existence, one characterized by repetition and loss rather than by an accumulation of experience.

The figures incessantly delineated by the laser beams represent a definitive loss of direction; they draw shapes that, in their momentary flashing, show an indissoluble tangle instead of unambiguous linearity. The sonorous darkness contained in the large sphere opens up to a circularity, one between the voice and its echo, which refers to an idea of continuous repetition and therefore to a circular conception of time that is in opposition to a linear notion of accumulation and economy. The large sphere and the darkness it contains also recall celestial spheres and cosmic time, poetically (and perhaps actually as well) close to the idea of cyclical nature and the eternal return, in any case something other than everyday time.

Bertocchi links macro and micro dimensions and associates them with a concept of artistic work that is close to the idea of pure loss, knowing however that it is found, like a secret motor, in the heart of all things

COPYRIGHT 2001 Artforum International Magazine, Inc.

COPYRIGHT 2001 Gale Group