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Matias Guerra_ interview by Filippo Lorenzin

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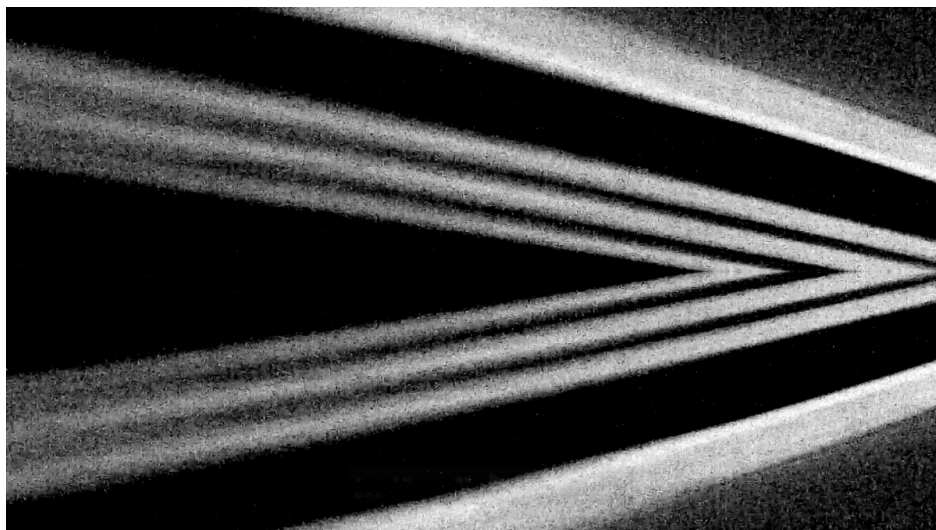
F.L. - When and how was WATT(0)KNOTT born?
M.G. - Watt(0)Knott has different moments, something like: conception, birth, growth and re-birth if you will, the first formalization dates around august 2012. On 22 september 2012 Simone Petracca, Francesco Rizzo and I performed, as per the original project that saw the video as part of a live performance, with live-electronics, guitar and percussions. In 2013 we then recorded - same formation - new tracks to create a proper short film for spazioUltra; completely new sounds from the original project and I think still open to change! We follow a graphical score, more or less diligently that leads us back to beckettian themes and worlds.

F.L. - I think it's interesting that the piece is in continuous evolution, that changes in time. Is this common in your art praxis?
M.G. - Each work is a sign of evolution; technically I do stop to analyze the errors of each piece, to understand what can be improved, then I move on. It's very rare for me to go back to a piece to perfection it, I rather have several works that are in continuous evolution. When I started to paint "seriously", I created a series of pieces with salt, glue and pigments, the salt (as, but in a different way, the pigments and wood as support) will react differently to light or humidity according to the ambient conditions, thus evolving, worsening or improving - what I find interesting is that it acts very simple physical changes in reaction to the given space and I am fascinated by the continuous transformation that an object applies not only on the viewer or whom lives the object but also on itself.

F.L. - This attitude to accept changes in time of your works I believe goes against the digital matter of some of them. What do you think?M.G. - In what way is the digital matter antithetic to change? taking for granted that you intend the digital matter as non subject to mutation by external factors, I'll try to respond: I'm interested in studying mechanisms of perception, which I believe are always evolving, our perception of an object is modified by multiple factors, one of which is time. Having said that, I think that even though Caravaggio's Cardsharps is and always will be the object The Cardsharps of Caravaggio, the perception of the painting is always evolving, and hence that The Cardsharps of '600 are not the same of today here, as they cheat for you in one way and for me in another...We could open a huge chapter on digital (im)materiality but I don't think it's the case now, what I retain important of the digital mean is the possibility to create instruments that create, and that can become a complex system (hence not instrument anymore).

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F.L. - Can you describe the way in which you follow the graphical score?

M.G. - In the current work there is alas hardly any trace of the original score, we've kept merely some simple individual notes. Firstly we analyzed Beckett's text, I generated a synthesis by macro-themes and constituted a paradoxical algorithm where the succession points of the algorithm play around the ambivalent significants of Watt and Knott. With this premise we then decided an executional part for each macro-theme, for the audio and video. The score has then indications for the parts, time and intensity. Once live there are moments with the absolute absence of video with ad-libs for the instrumentalists. Watt(0)Knott as a live performance changes according to the space, due to the acoustics and to the live-electronics - I modify in real time some frequencies of the sound coming from the instruments and from the "silence" of the room, hence also the timings of the video change.

F.L. - Why did you choose precisely this text of Beckett?

M.G. - Regarding Watt some points are important: it was Beckett's last novel, a boundary zone already in change; it was written in France and exactly awaiting for the war to end, not a passive wait. I was mainly struck by the book's structure that, without going into detail, could be non-linear but by nodes (knots), parts that could be easily read alone or in inverse order, there are impeccable virtuosities and maniacal repetitions of certain elements, hyper-detailed descriptions as much as characters that enter and leave the scene without any apparent meaning, even Watt enters and leaves the novel as a service to the act of writing and not as a main character per se.

F.L. - Have you planned future developments for this project?

M.G. - We'll execute a series of live performances in 2014, mainly we want to continue working together with the Watt(0)Knott experience as a base start.

F.L. - What are you're plans for the next months?

M.G. - I am preparing a trip to Patagonia for a complex work that I have already started and of which I do not know the development yet, as a friend of mine would say: I am searching for a frame of time where the image and sound can create memory!

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