

Meeting with

Francesca Pietropaolo

The Poetic of Space. Dialogues between Art and Architecture in the Present Tense

Salutations by the Dean, Polytechnic, Bari, **Nicola Costantino** / Presentation by **Francesco Moschini**

Polytechnic of Bari - Aula Magna 'Attilio Alto' - Thursday 17 December 2009 - 11.00 a.m.

Coordinated by Vincenzo D'Alba, Antonio Labalestra, Francesco Maggiore, Lorenzo Pietropaolo, Domenico Rinaldi / Collaboration by Giovanni Laterza.

Examining the multiple dialogues at play between art and architecture, this lecture will address the notion of the poetic of space in contemporary art through a selection of works in different mediums - sculpture, installation, painting, photography, and drawing - by a range of artists of different generations and hailing from different countries. Richly diverse in formal, intellectual and poetic scope, the works under consideration all share the ability to conjure illuminating and often unexpected dialogues with architecture's essential impulse to 'think and make space'. With their *poetic* capacity to create and conjure novel spaces, both physical and mental, they demonstrate the unfettering power of imagination. As once described by French philosopher Gaston Bachelard in his seminal book *The Poetic of Space* (1957), the imagination produces images and in so doing it "opens onto the future".

Drawing on the speaker's direct experience of working closely with many of them, the lecture will offer a close examination of the recent work of artists such as the Nigerian born painter Odili Odita with his brightly colored geometric wall paintings; Italian artist Luca Buvoli with his multi-media, walk-in installations inspired by Futurism; the late American Elizabeth Murray with her jazzy shaped canvases which often incorporate the white wall on which they hang as a constitutive element of their fragmented images. Architecture often becomes more explicitly the subject of art as in the case of the group Alterazioni Video with their project "Sicilian Incompletion" on buildings that were never completed, or it runs as a thread through the work of Tatiana Trouvé whose drawings and sculptures exist in-between the second, third and fourth dimension. While this lecture will explore the manifold ways in which some contemporary artists tackle notions and experiences of space - inner and outer space, public and private, fullness and emptiness, etc. -, it will also interweave the discussion of their poetics and working methods with a reflection on the dialogues between art and architecture that ensue in another particular space: that of the exhibition setting. Special emphasis will be given to the case of the international exhibition of the 2007 Venice Biennale. The notion of the exhibition as a space of provisional encounter among artworks, and as a meeting convened between art and the public will be discussed, touching upon the craft of exhibition making with insights into its process. The lecture will also address the relationship between art and the urban fabric through some key examples of recent public art, with particular reference to commissions for the Public Art Fund, New York.

Dr. Francesca Pietropaolo Italian art historian of modern and contemporary art, and independent curator. In 1999-2001 she worked at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis focusing on the exhibition *Zero to Infinity. Arte Povera 1962-1972* organized in collaboration with Tate Modern, London. From 2001 to 2006 she worked at The Museum of Modern Art, New York on exhibitions drawn from the drawings permanent collection such as *New to the Modern* (2001), and *Drawing from the Modern, 1945-1975* (2005), as well as on international loan-based shows such as *Drawing Now: Eight Propositions* (2002), *Roth Time: A Dieter Roth Retrospective* (2004), and *Plane Image: A Brice Marden Retrospective* (2006). In 2004 she was a participant in submission review sessions as part of the curatorial selection process of New York-based artists for the exhibition *Greater New York 2005* at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, NY, a MoMA affiliate. From 2005 to 2007 she worked closely with the Artistic Director of the 52nd Venice Biennale as Executive Curatorial and Research Specialist for the international exhibition *Think with the Senses – Feel with the Mind* (2007) and its catalogue. In 2008 she was a member of the jury for the international competition launched by the Pablo Neruda Foundation and the Ministry of Culture of Chile for a public art commission in memory of Pablo Neruda in Cantalao, Chile. Among her most recent projects, she organized as co-curator, together with Robert Storr, the international exhibition *Wrinkles in Time/Images Unconfined* for the IVAM museum, Valencia, Spain (2009), part of the "Confines" exhibition project organized by IVAM with the contribution of international curators such as Robert Wilson among others.

With an academic background formed between Italy (Università Ca' Foscari, Venice) and the United States (Columbia University, NY), she has focused her research interests on postwar European and North American art, and international contemporary art. Her writings include: the introductory essay on the exhibition *Wrinkles in Time/Images Unconfined* published by IVAM, Valencia (2009); the essay *Slow it Down to the Limit: Futurism at Velocity Zero* on Luca Buvoli published by the Estorick Collection, London (2009); essays for the 52. Venice Biennale catalogue on contemporary artists such as Yto Barrada, Louise Bourgeois, Luca Buvoli, Dan Perjovschi, Rainer Ganahl, Ilya & Emilia Kabakov, and Nancy Spero (2007); essays for the exhibition catalogue *Greater New York 2005* on numerous artists including Dominic McGill and David Moreno; essays and contributions for publications by The Museum of Modern Art, New York such as *Drawing from the Modern* (2004-2005) issued in three volumes, and *Plane Image: A Brice Marden Retrospective* (2006); an essay on Michelangelo Pistoletto for the Walker Art Center permanent collection catalogue *Bits and Pieces Put Together to Present a Semblance of a Whole* (2005). As art critic, she has contributed to *Flash Art International* – with reviews on artists such as Richard Tuttle and Daniel Buren, among others – and writes for *ARTnews*, *Art in America*, and *Arte e Critica*.