

CONTEMPORARY

IDENTITIES

International Art Magazine

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Dislocamento, 2021, Villa Iblea Exhibition, Modica, IT

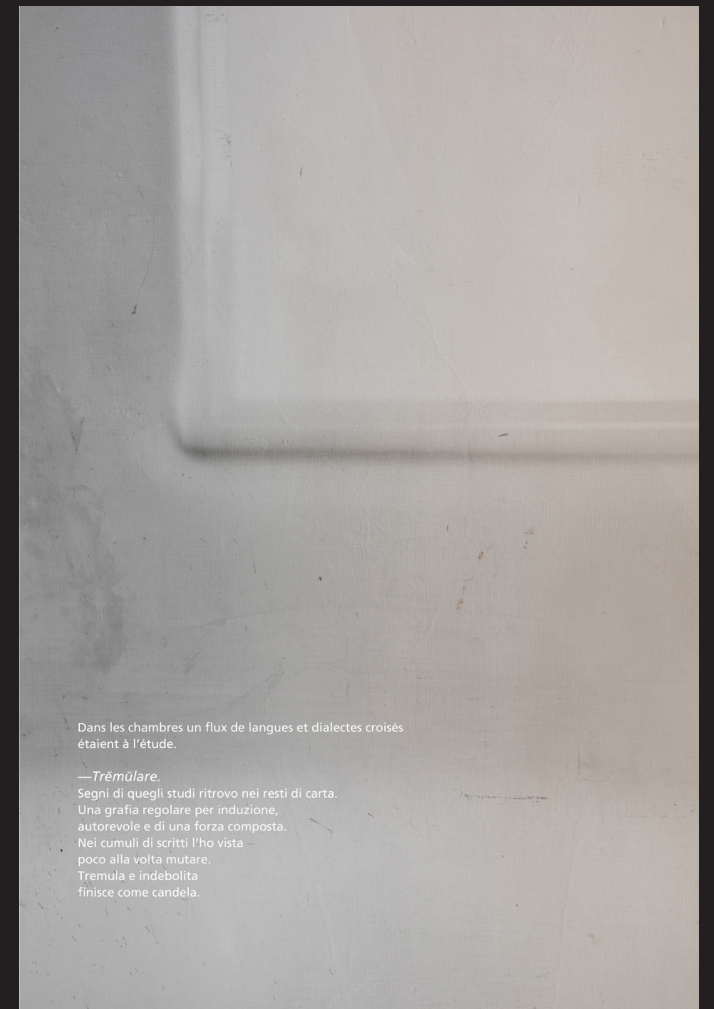
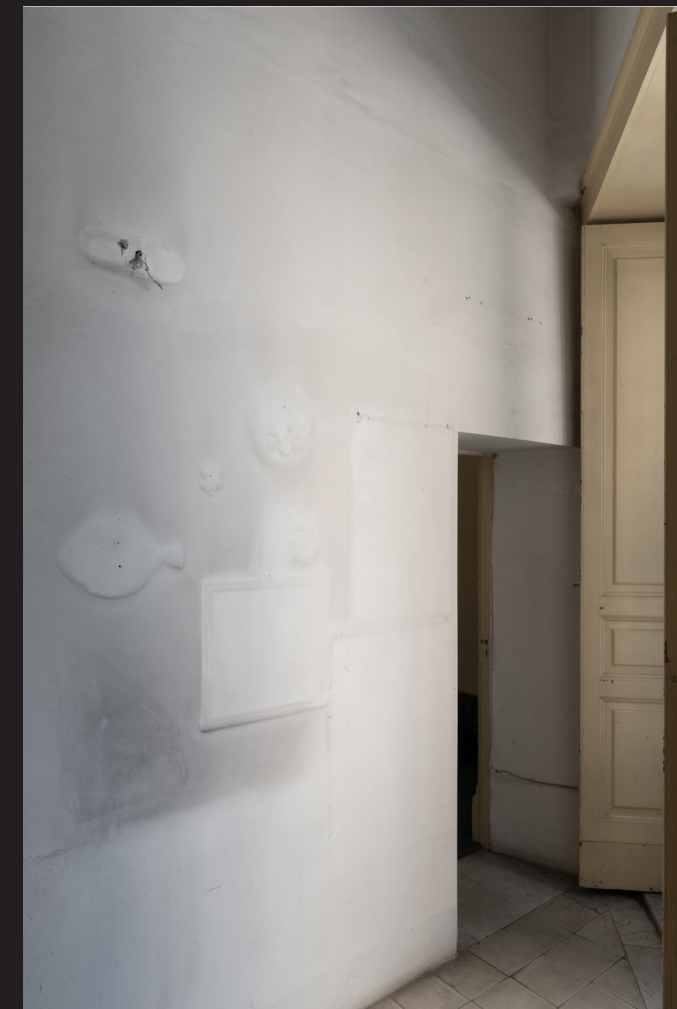
CI: Please introduce yourself.

AG: I have an interdisciplinary background. During my studies at the academy of fine arts my immediate teachers were two Italian visual artists who were clearly acclaimed – Antonino Virduzzo and Guido La Regina; later I was also taught by musicologists such as Salvatore E. Failla and anthropologists from the Palermitan school, first and foremost Francesco Carbone. On concluding my academic studies, I worked in intermedial linguistic areas, uniting visuality with textual and sound data. Between the 1980s and the year 2000 I worked, again in Italy, with Florentine and Palermitan groups and with Italian protagonists in verbal–visual research: Carlo Belloli, Mirella Bentivoglio, Luciano Caruso, Giovanni Fontana, Eugenio Miccini.

I operate as an artist–researcher, at the same time for several decades I have worked as a teacher at the Academy of Fine Arts in Catania. I've concentrated on the investigation of space and the "Flexible

project dimension of the object, in particular the artist's book and serial art objects. This interest for linguistic crossover and applied technological research led, in 2008, to the founding in Catania, Sicily, of the KoobookArchive and the Folio # periodical, both still active. This periodical comes out of the experience gained in the field of specialized publishing with the co-editorship of the magazine Carte d'Arte internationale in the 1990s and a collaboration since the year 2000 with the Roman magazine dedicated to in-depth study, Arte e Critica.

Again in Catania, a few years ago I founded On the Contemporary, a space dedicated to questioning matters related to the contemporary. This workshop on thought and the activity that arises from it, as experimentation and verification of exhibition practice as well as the natural proposition of languages and themes, have evolved as a "model of a flexible community".



Dislocamento #3-4, 2021. Print on paper, Hahnemühle Photo Rag mounted on Dibond, 105 x 140 cm, Diptych

community” is precisely the terminology that defines the *modus operandi* that I practice in tune with small group of colleague artists and which is directed at intercepting problematics around which, in the absence of hierarchies, converging and various answers from artists of various provenances and backgrounds can come together; all of the projects for the exhibitions I have put on in this space have arisen following this procedure. The aim is to generate and maintain in life a community space for reflection and subsequent action regarding a problematic of the contemporary. The artists and the intellectuals I have contacted, together with myself, have generally provided very different responses. My own approach, as well as that of those contacted, is a propositional one within a flexible situation that acts as a dialectic point of view. So far, On the Contemporary has realised about ten projects, including some dedicated to humanitarian values and reflection on Nature.

CI: What art do you most identify with?

AG: In general my work in its ideas and organization involves participation and sharing. From the purely individual point of view, as a working artist I place myself in the area of contaminations and synaesthesia, wherein – as I’ve mentioned – it’s possible in an intermedial linguistic environment to unite visuality with the textual data of writing without excluding sound data. I move within the field of the photographic installation that includes textual elements.

CI: Tell us about your earliest influences.

AG: The basis of my path has been an in-depth knowledge of the basic moments of the 20th century, not only on a European scale. In Italy and Europe, moreover, the incidence of historical avant-gardes such as Futurism, Dadaism, Lettrism, etc. was very important. At the same time, it was formative to acquire a sense of design through the lessons of Gropius and the artists he summoned to the Bauhaus and the study of Gestalt. My beginnings can be traced back to geometric abstraction, concrete and visual poetry, and the concept of the ‘open work’. It was also crucial to be clear about the concept of contamination between the arts and to understand the linguistic crossover between media and digital technologies. Direct contact with a number of Italian and international masters has also had an impact on me, which has given my training an open-mindedness, a dynamic outlook and *modus operandi*, and the ability to connect music and poetry with graphic and pictorial experimentation, with objectivity, photography and writing.

CI: Tell us about your current practice.

AG: The theme in my photo-graphical-objectual research is identity, from the single entity of one’s own name to the Selbst and extended to places, i.e. identity with psychological–ludic and proxemic–anthropological connotations. “Dislocamento” [“Displacing”], my recent project that is still underway, currently presents itself as an extended photographic–textual sequence on a roll of paper located in a display case, as a printing proof of the graphic project of a book. Parallel to this, some extracts from the sequence dilate onto the wall some contents from the hypothetical book, which in its actual finished form is still missing.

The verbal–visual research that I have been developing since the 1980s, a monotone painting based on the reiteration of minimal textual cells centred on the text–image relationship, from the year 2000 onwards has moved towards a special use of photography consisted of quotations and references to personal lived experience. The theme, in my current work too, is the identity of the individual and of the places investigated initially through the study of palindromes, the specific entity of my own name “Anna”, to then arrive at the Selbst and open up to psychical and proxemic–anthropological connotations.

“Dislocamento” is focused on research relating to the relationship between individual and place, moving reflection towards a sort of impersonal autobiography. The narrative impersonality of the text is combined with that of the estrangement suggested by the transit and the stopping in the actual and imaginary places of private lived experience and finds expression in the personal–impersonal that is translated into the photographic images. Some “objects of affection” constitute a sort of integrated expansion of that which becomes a photographic–object installation that refers to my personal real



Dislocamento #1-2, 2021. Print on paper, Hahnemühle Photo Rag mounted on Dibond, 140 x 105 cm, Diptych

and specious genealogy. Currently an extract from this recent production is exhibited at the On the Contemporary space – in the Garden, at Caltanissetta in Sicily, in the project “In Dialogue – Ian Hamilton Finlay, Antonio Freiles, Anna Guillot”. The fil rouge of the exhibition is interest for the word and for poetic writing, artistic experimentation, passion for the book–work, love for publishing, sharing with the most esteemed artists. Written contributions in the catalogue come from the art theoretician Luciana Rogozinski and the scholar Paolo Emilio Antognoli.

CI: What does your work seek to say?

AG: “Everything happens unbeknownst or is chosen carefully in the profusion of materials that are close by, it is combined with words in order to obtain a simple poetic image. There will be no need to seek those plastic qualities, those virtuositities, or the merits that one usually sees associated with artistic products. These objects should amuse, disturb, mystify or provoke reflection. The images collected here should above all captivate (in the sense of capture) – which is then the only sure road to appreciation”. Man Ray was once invited to write of himself and his readymades and he left a text from which I borrow a quotation that I think in some ways is valid as a key to my work too. Of course, mine, which has always been research, cannot and will not turn out to be a disruptive operation. Until the year 2000 it was a punctilious work on language through the use of ambiguously semantic writing, a kind of obsession in a certain amanuensis-like profile expounded in many cycles of works: it is true, for example, for the interminable sequence of “It is” but also for the earlier “Continuum-contiguus” and “Poesia mimetica,” cycles where the self-control of manuality prevailed as a need for discipline. The continuity of this kind of graphic-writing practice has broken down over the past 20 years. I have long posited a poetics of the object, connected with photography and graphic art, taking me on an evocative yet disorienting line, where the “object trouvé” is often my accomplice with subtle, destabilizing and provocative roles.



KOOBOOK – Deconstruction of the Archive, 2019. Found furniture, artist's books and magazines, object books, books and archive files, fanzines, catalogs. Detail



KOOBOOK – Deconstruction of the Archive, 2019. Found furniture, artist's books and magazines, object books, books and archive files, fanzines, catalogs, 230x70x60 cm

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of the Archive, 2019
Books and archive files,
fanzines, catalogs,
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EDITORS' NOTE

Futurism, irony, meta physic, mythology, and other topics are highlighted from our critiques in the selection of international artists in the current Issue of ContemporaryIdentities.

Issue 12 features an interview with Anna Guillot, Italian interdisciplinary artist and curator. We had a chance to talk to her about her current practice as an artist.

Furthermore, we are very much thankful to the collaborating artists in this Issue.

In addition to Zoltán Somhegyi, our board member, we also had the pleasure of working with international guest writers such as Cima Azzam (UAE), Tima Jam (Iran-UK), Sophie Kazan (UK) and Anna Righetto (Hungary-Italy).

We are very grateful to enclose 2021 through discovering and featuring contemporary talents and souls. We are looking forward to the surprises of 2022.

Hopefully next year will be a step closer to the restoration of the world as we experienced before Covid-19 for the humans' relations. Artists will always be mirrors of the time and we will try to give them a window.

Take care everyone
Sara Berti & Elham Shafaei

