



MAGAZZINO

Daniele Puppi

VENTIVENTUNO

Curated by Valentino Catricalà

14 May – 30 June 2021

Dossier and exhibition video:

<https://vimeo.com/555160743>

VENTIVENTUNO

Affecting the body is Daniele Puppi's aim. The observer's body obviously. Undoubtedly, if the purpose is to address the body, it is necessary to work on the surrounding environment: giving shape to the architecture of the space. This is one of the benchmarks of Puppi's work: realizing site-specific video-installations that intertwine the surrounding environment with images and sound, in order to create drastic and explosive experiences. Often even mystical. This might be a consideration for this exhibition, imagined, not by chance, during one of the most tragic moments of our existence, namely the spreading of the global pandemic.

It is known that Puppi's works are characterized by monumental site-specific installations based on a reinterpretation of the architectural space, through the repetition of one single action, an action finalized to the viewer's shock and amazement. In this sense, Puppi is highly cinematographic, close to the imaginary of primitive cinema – developed from the end of 800 to 1915 circa. As Tom Gunning explains, instead of making people concentrate on narration, the early screenings encouraged the public to remain aware of the act of looking, of the impulse and excitement of images. If novelty attraction of the early cinema industry is based on impulses and enthusiasm, Puppi's works bring us to a further step: instead of the act of looking, Puppi encourages the public to the act of feeling through the body. Similarly, the installation in VENTIVENTUNO welcomes visitors right at the entrance of the gallery. A pedestal, a television with a cathode ray tube Mivar (it is not by chance the choice of that particular television), and a fragment of the video. The work is titled *MENOCCHIO*, from the Friulian miller processed and executed in 1500. The video represents a bizarre figure (an animal? a man with a costume? Or maybe both?) in an open air, natural landscape yet excessively colored and saturated, almost fake, in a moment just before slowing down the pace out of tiredness. Menocchio is stuck in that instant that represents the moment when our body, after the ultimate push, asks us to slow down. That precise moment is repeated in the video, slowed down and accelerated in a continuous loop. An instant lived by a man-beast, another feature highly present in Puppi's work. As if he were suggesting: “come in and think about our mental and physical states”. Besides the man as a rational entity of course.

A reflection that we find in the monumental work in the main gallery space. A video-installation in which the apparent simplicity of a landscape is set against the power of nature in a menacing sky traversed by lightnings and electric discharges. A natural phenomenon that the artist stumbled across one evening going back to his studio. There is no post-production except the strong sound that accompanies the discharges. In this case Puppi forces us to stare from a frontal perspective, atypical in his practice, that imposes a meditative and wondering attitude towards a powerful nature that overwhelms us. The artist's suggestion takes a particular importance in this very moment, reminding us to be aware of the immensity of what stands above us, to reconnect with a different vision of the earth and of ourselves.

An awareness that is made possible by an “hallucinoptical voyage” (*FANTASTIC VOYAGE*), as the work is titled. What we see in this work is an experiment scene inside a laboratory. The work becomes a sculpture, as the images of the movie rotate, breaking the bidimensionality; the image seems to come towards us, coming out from the screen to touch us. Furthermore, the exhibition continues inside a space not habitually used for exhibiting: the office. Here we find *MASTER BLASTER*, an audio-video installation that recombines some images of Buster Keaton's movie *Sherlock Jr.* (1924). The images are revived by a hissing and tormenting sound that overturn the original comic state of the movie into an anxious race in which the main character does not have control over his actions.

Valentino Catricalà

MENOCCHIO

2021

Audiovisual installation (Mivar 16" CRT Monitor,
iron plinth, directional speaker)
Edition of 3

Duration: 60

To access the video: <https://vimeo.com/551861121>





MENOCCHIO

2021

Audio visual installation
Installation view

MASTER BLASTER

2020

Audio visual installation (Mivar 20" CRT Monitor,
Brightsign media player, iron plinth, speakers)
Edition of 3

To access the video: <https://vimeo.com/551860461>



MASTER BLASTER

2020

Audio visual installation (Mivar 20" CRT Monitor,
Brightsign media player, iron plinth, speakers)
Edition of 3



Detail

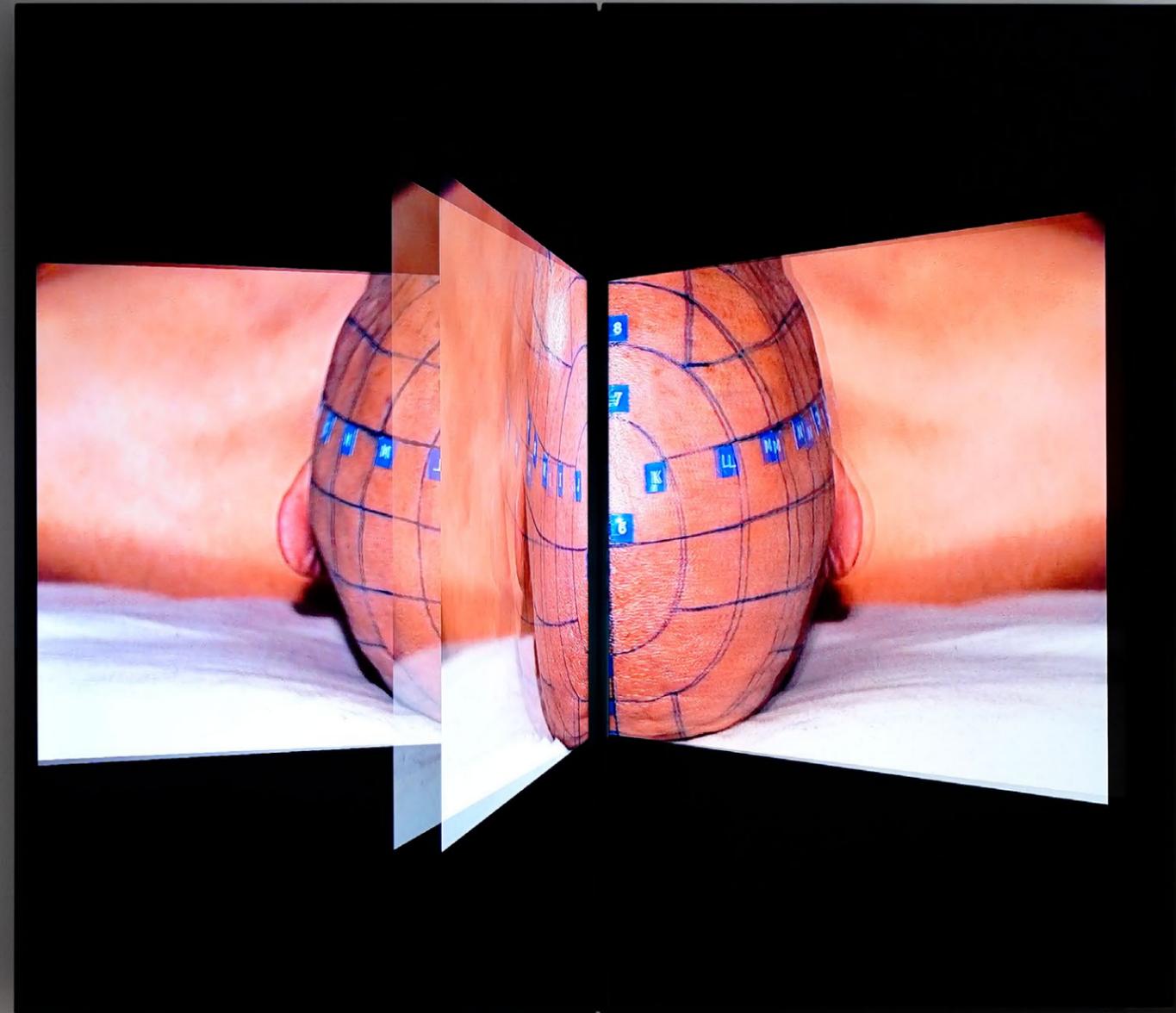
FANTASTIC VOYAGE

2021

Audiovisual installation (Two 65" LED Monitor,
Brightsign media players, speakers)
Edition of 3 + 1 AP

Duration: 58' 47'

To access the video: <https://vimeo.com/551858953>

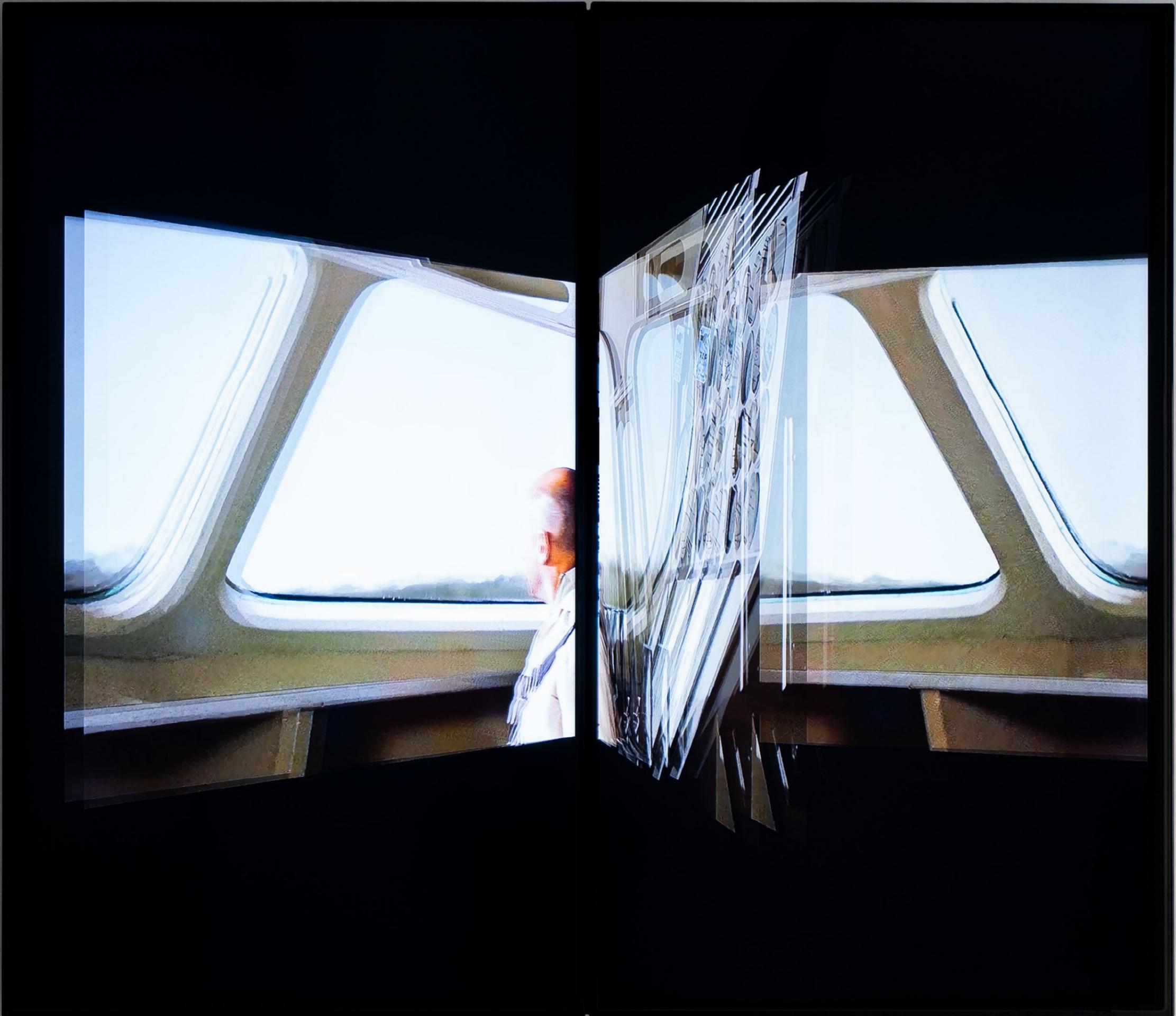




FANTASTIC VOYAGE

2021

Audio visual installation



FANTASTIC VOYAGE

2021

Audio visual installation

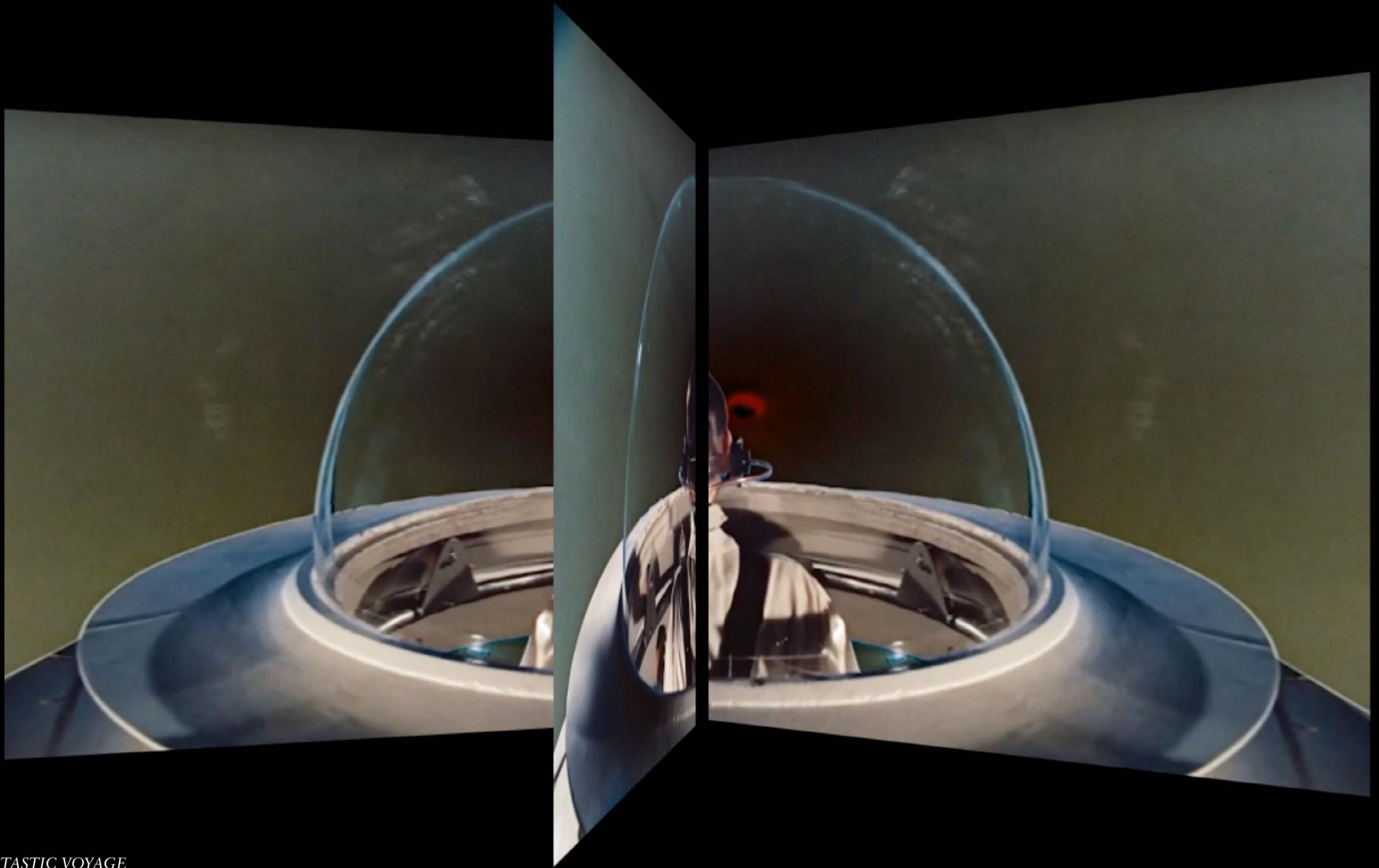


FANTASTIC VOYAGE

2021

Still from video

To access the video: <https://vimeo.com/552396201/b870fe72f>



FANTASTIC VOYAGE

2021

Still from video

MAGAZZINO

NOTTURNO

2020

Audio visual installation (Single channel installation
video on LED wall)
Edition of 3

Duration: 18'10". Dimensions variable

To access the video: <https://vimeo.com/551859700>





NOTTURNO

2020

Audio visual installation



NOTTURNO

2020

Audio visual installation



NOTTURNO

2020

Still from video

To access the video: <https://vimeo.com/552399947/730fddd5a5>

Conversation between Barbara London and Valentino Catricalà

Valentino Catricalà: Daniele Puppi's exhibition at Magazzino Gallery is called 2020. What he tried to bring as a whole into this project are the energies of this specific era, a peculiar one, setting up installations both inside and outside the gallery. Besides that, he will also be showing a piece about an electromagnetic storm, illuminating an industrial urban setting. The exhibition is the artist's response to this tempestuous moment in time. In the large-scale exterior video installation we see two people fighting, a white and a black person; an exchange between two cultures that, instead of collaborating, fight relentlessly. The electromagnetic storm depicted in the second video installation is suggestive of something beyond our control: the immense energy of the planet. Both installations are very strong, very intense. The question I had when I saw the video was: How do you think an artist could face this strange period? How could he process the energy of this particular, historical moment?

Barbara London: It's interesting to watch these videos on my little computer screen. I saw Daniele's works when we were together in Colombia. Thus, I had a feeling for the physicality, I could imagine them in a physical space. I knew from the previous works, that he deals a lot with ferocious energy, there's something very forceful about what he does. Over the last seven, or so, months of the time we've been living through of Covid, many artists have been in the studio planning and preparing, very few have the opportunity, like Daniele, to actually realize a new work and put it out into the public. So, in that way he's very fortunate, but I can see that he's very much continuing to develop his previous themes and ideas. To me what he's making is almost sculptural, if we take for example the fighting scene out of the John Carpenter in the larger film. The way he thinks about it, just like a swinging pendulum...to me it's a lot about balance in the world which is always imperfect. This is very interesting to me. Talking with other artists too, the feeling is quite the same: we don't know yet what we are going to get as a result, this is definitely a gestation period, of deep thinking and very provocative.

Now in terms of his smaller work, this playing with the lightning, it makes me think about other artists who work with nature and its fury. After all, nature is very violent... you can imagine how ancient humanity was scared of this kind of light show up in the sky. What it's interesting about Daniele's work is that he orchestrates nature, just like fireworks. I know about Arte Povera and how its artists have worked with nature and the power of it, but I think also of earlier British painters as William Turner, there was actually a lot of study of nature, and its purpose was understanding it. This is pretty much what we are facing now, this a contemporary iteration of the study of nature, so you could say the painter Constable studied the clouds, Bill Viola went to a volcano and explored the sulfur fumes, the artist Guido van Der Werve also went to Mount St. Helen where a volcano eruption had happened. To me Daniele Puppi is part of a tradition of artists working with force of nature and it's funny that many of them are men. To me it's like a male thing.

VC: Daniele's work is very physical, in the beginning of his career he realized a series of works called Fatiche (Efforts) where he repeated the same kind of strong and violent actions, like punching something. One of the principal points of Daniele's work is the sound, which expands, reverberates, and has an impact on the body. In my opinion, the difference between Daniele and other artists is the fact that for him there is always a dialogue with space: it is frequently a site-specific installation. As in this exhibition, he saw the space and he decided to create a dialogue between the space outside and inside, between the exhibition space and courtyard. Through this, the body experiences in a new spatial perception, as with the storm video installation in the smaller exhibition space.

BL: The reason why I thought about this matter is that I recently wrote a text about Guido van der Werve (born 1977, Holland). He also pushes the limits of the physical, he did Ironman marathon for example. Then thinking about others of the past, Nauman isn't the only one, and certainly Daniele's work has to be related with performance as you indicated. I'm trying to think about a Taiwanese born artist Tehching Hsieh (born 1950, Nanzu, Taiwan and lives New York). He did this series of performances over one year period. Every hour he punched a time clock and at that point he took a photo himself. What results from the film he made was his final exhaustion at the end of the year. That's another example of an artist who really pushes himself to the edge. Another one, who's probably less known, is an English artist Stuart Brisley (born 1933, Haslemere, lives London) who had a very strong poetics. He was very much against the status quo, he's now 80 or something, but also unbelievably strong. In one piece he almost fought like a boxer with another younger artist, in a very rough place. So, there are examples.

VC: As we said one of the point of Daniele's work is the sound. This is not so common with video artists. Usually the video is more important than the sound, or important in the same way. In Daniele's work it is either as important as the video, or even more so. This is evident in the big installation, but also in the small one. It is the sound of the storm that creates the storm itself, and illuminates the environment. What you called the force of nature comes primarily from the sound.

BL: Well I think of other artists who also did that. Ryoji Ikeda is one of them. He really hits you very strong with sound and also with light. Another one is Carsten Nicolai, and going back the earlier works called Tuned Environments, where he thought about a physical space, the sound was so overbearing that you almost had to run, he did exactly the same. I wouldn't call it a school, but this is certainly a direction that some artists have taken towards really loud and strong sounds. It's a bit like going to raves or concerts where the music is so loud that your whole body ends up shaking. I wouldn't call it pure music because so much of that is a hybrid. These are artists practicing, exploring and experimenting how it is to

push the limits beyond what is proper. It's a bit like hoping in nature balance, but it's not a balance, you never know when it's going to flip.

VC: I really appreciated your metaphor of the pendulum. It is right that there is this uncertainty and difficulty in finding the right balance. This could be the connection between the two videos. I would like to focus a bit more on the concept of nature, that currently is returning to gain its relevance in the art field. Most of 60's and 70's artists were working with nature, not only Arte Povera, and then again in 2000's. It seems that there is a need of nature in the contemporary art world; but a new idea of nature -not in a romantic way- which still carries on a dualism idea of man-nature, but in a new way, often closer to the idea of anthropocentrism. In regards to Daniele, I would refer to animality. Daniele's work is often about pushing out an internal animal force, as we see in the piece with the two men fighting, as well as the internal force of nature of the other video.

BL: It's nature but it's also looking for alternatives. After Arte Povera, Land Art tried to have an art practice that was not collectable, but it was about finding an alternative, new forms. Going out in the nature, where there was freedom, we had the hippy movement, communes and all kinds of things. And then the early digital thought: "what are you going to do as a subject matter? How are you going to get people to look at these new forms? How are you going to get a collector to buy these new forms?". But things were always familiar. But now, so much is unknown, you can't travel, you stay close to home and maybe you study the plants you have in the window. You want to see light, people who own a house are all gardening, so I think it's normal because you want stasis, you want to sense calm. If outside we've got all of the craziness, what we can control is our garden, our flowerpot in the window or what we eat or read.

VC: There are plenty of work by artists using what once was called "found footage". Today it has become a common practice and we now have archives to take things from: the internet is a huge dynamic archive. Found footage it is no longer the right world. But what I see in the art of Daniele Puppi, since his early career, is a new concept of found footage, pushing forward the idea of archive in art. Firstly, because his use of archival materials is always transformed into site-specific installations, not used for another video. Secondly, because this site-specific interest allows him to play with many different projections and to create a sort of found footage wall mapping installation, as in the case of this exhibition.

BL: There were many artists beyond Dara Birnbaum in the USA who used found footage to comment the depiction of women on television for example, for various unpolitical reasons. Antoni Muntadas has done a whole series on political announcements for elections and with a very political agenda. Some others like the Hungarian Péter Forgács in the series My Private Hungary paid a lot of attention to the private dimension creating stories about ordinary life. Basically, he finds material in flea markets,

intercutting that with news clips from the time, that's a very strong and important work. But you have to keep in mind that he's very lucky. He came of age as an artist when video projection was not expensive. When people like Nam Jun Paik or Woodie and Steina Vasulka and the older ones began to experiment, nobody had a projector as it was amazingly expensive. You assembled the whole mountain of tv's ads and that's how you've got your panorama with multiple monitors, not exactly precise and clear, but instead chaotic in terms of installations. So yes, he's very lucky to work in this age.