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Rilancio e sostegno della Fondazione Donnarregina  
Sezione PROGETTO XXI



**FONDAZIONE MORRAGRECO**

ALLORA VERO  
CEZARY BODZIANOWSKI  
CURATED BY PIERRE BAL-BLANC

The title of the artist's solo exhibition, *Allora Vero Cezary Bodzianowski curated by Pierre Bal-Blanc*, can be interpreted not only as a simple line of titles and credits, but also as a sentence that seems incomplete, requiring an exclamation or question mark to be grammatically correct.

The exhibition proposes to highlight this duality in the reading of reality from its title. The artist's works favour the invisible gap, frozen time, or suspension of places.

The invitation to the public is to embody physically, throughout the succession of rooms in Palazzo Caracciolo di Avellino, the experience provoked by Cezary Bodzianowski's works, to follow the spectacle of these *parabases* or these deviations from reality.

This kinetic movement operated by the visitor synchronizes or is asynchronous with the clever editing of the video captures of Cezary Bodzianowski's gestures documented by his partner Monika Chojnicka, who is also the first witness to the *lazzis* that the artist performs in everyday life, here in Naples or elsewhere.

«Parabase» and «lazzi»: it is indeed a specific vocabulary to which one must refer on the occasion of this Neapolitan exhibition by Cezary Bodzianowski, a terminology that associates the artist's practice more with that of *Pulcinella* (a Neapolitan anti-hero present in the frescoes of the princess Caracciolo's toilet cabinet) rather than that of a «dada» - which has become by historians a more conventional term to describe any deviation from conventions. Cezary Bodzianowski's exhibition shows a deeper genealogy that connects us through his works to satyrs, silenuses, and Polichinelles.

Cezary Bodzianowski was born in 1968 in Szczecin, Poland, and lives and works in Lodz. He studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in the atelier of Professor Marek Konieczny and then at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. In an interview conducted by Adam Szymczyk for Flash Art, he says about his years of study in Warsaw:

*Completely unhindered studying of art's secrets: until 4 p.m., painting on a set topic; after 4 p.m., the Studio. Marek Konieczny, night-long discussions; work, work, work. You wanted to live, wanted to drink from this source as much as you could. Then it all came to an end. Our professor was expelled from the Academy for depraving the students (very much like Socrates). And us? Each of us went in his or her own direction. What remained was the dream.*

(<https://flash--art.com/article/cezary-bodzianowski/>)

The studio of Professor Marek Konieczny only functioned for one year (from March 1, 1989, to February 20, 1990). The creation of an atelier led by artists from outside the Academy was one of the demands of the students, who asked profound reforms from the Academy authorities. The first invited professor chosen by the students was Marek Konieczny, whose key concept of his work is *Think Crasy*. He is an eccentric artist who brought a new quality to the fossilized Academy. As Łukasz



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Ronduda writes, «*he spread around him a provocative aura of strangeness, of a certain radically aesthetic way of life, which eclipsed art extracted from reality through the framework of painting.*» The never codified program of his studio can be summed up as follows: *there will be no painting here*. It is a chain of individual initiations. It is not painting that plays the central role, but debates on the couch brought for this purpose in the atelier, around the definition of art, its institutional entanglement, or the position of the artist.

Cezary Bodzianowski mingled with students Artur Dynowski, Piotr Uklański, and Jarosław Paluch who would become recognized artists from this atelier. A contemporary studio neighboring that of Professor Grzegorz Kowalski, who transmitted the teachings received from Oscar Hansen to another group of Polish artists celebrated on the international scene, including Paweł Althamer, Katarzyna Górna, Katarzyna Kozyra, Mariusz Maciejewski, Jacek Markiewicz, Monika Zielińska, and Artur Żmijewski.

After the break of the Konieczny atelier, Cezary Bodzianowski exiled himself to Antwerp, where he confronted new influences, and the ensemble of artefacts perished in the flooding of his lodger's cellar. This catastrophic event, to say the least biblical, may explain his quest towards ephemeral actions and reducing his traces to immaterial residues, such as tea bags consumed daily and ligatured together to form meaningful chains, situated depending on the circumstances on a staircase railing or on a playing table, which are perhaps the most striking emblem of his current work.

It is the brewing time that catches the eye at first glance on these small consumed time bags, reduced to the Tea session or the ritual of breakfast that opens each day. The sequences of infused bags that make up Cezary Bodzianowski's assemblages offer abstract calendars or weekly planners whose numbers of days, months, and years give way to the specters of the gradients of various plant concoctions.

In his imaginary dialogue with Pulcinella about the frescoes of the villa in Zianigo, Giandomenico Tiepolo emphasizes the lightness of time that runs through his character with multiple facets, to which Pulcinella responds, «*Light as a plate of macaroni before eating it.*» Pulcinella's poetic art, called *macaronic*, is linked to the mixed dish of flour, cheese, and butter, often rustic and coarse. As Giorgio Agamben highlights in his essay *Entertainment for Young People in Four Scenes* dedicated to this comic figure: «*By devouring gnocchi, it is Pulcinella's own simplicity that he devours.*» In Tiepolo's series of brown ink pen drawings on traces of black stone referenced in Agamben's title, one can identify the Christological allusions made by Tiepolo to gnocchi and wine constantly wielded during these pranks by Pulcinella. These signs of the Eucharistic sacrifice taken to the extreme accompany the «*lazzi*», these senseless gestures whose purpose is only to interrupt the action and free oneself from any responsibility, from any assignment, suspending the gesture in its state of drunkenness and freezing time in its coagulating substance.

*The lazzi is not part of a plot, an action in a mythos, but according to the probable etymology of the word, it slows down and interrupts the sequence of actions, to suddenly tighten it.*

Giorgio Agamben, *Pulcinella or Divertimento per li ragazzi*, nottetempo, 2016



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Cezary Bodzianowski's art is not defined by the character or personality of the artist but by the cumulative resource of actions he produces in daily life, sometimes expanded by sedentary life (Łódź) or accelerated by travel (New York, Rome, Mexico, Jerusalem, Naples, etc.). The chronology of his works forms jagged narrative lines that one can energetically swim upstream, let oneself go with the flow, or choose to swim against the current. The tea bags — as others use candies that slowly melt in the mouth (F.G. Torres) — rhythmic, by their erratic presence, the actions automated by video captures. The *parabasis* is a rupture of the continuum of daily life. In ancient comedy, it refers to when the chorus members remove their masks and address the crowd, returning to their original state as citizens. «In Polichinelle's comedy, despite the stereotyped fiction of an intrigue, everything is parabasis», says Agamben, «he himself is parabasis.» In the moving figures he develops in interdependence with various environments, Cezary Bodzianowski systematically exits the stage of history, as the principle of «lazzi» is that the act itself belies the action to which he attaches himself. In **Tango**, the race he imposes on himself along the lines formed by the marble patterns of the hall of a ballroom follows a cycle according to the people encountered in this frequented lobby, who notice by a courteous sign or ignore the scarf hanging from the artist's jacket, sweeping the floor. This clothing accident shifts the scene into a mainly musical dimension by transforming the protagonists into notes distributed on a score. With **Alibi** it is the existence of vernacular decoration on a public entrance door in the shape of a heart that frames the bold gesture of sticking out the tongue at each entry or exit of an individual; politeness becomes a lewd threat. For **Serenade**, he updates Gulliver's strategy by reversing perspectives, and to quote the formula written by Klossowski for his *Roberte and Gulliver*, Cezary Bodzianowski finds,

*in the laws of optics*

*A way of behaving towards his fellow human beings*

*And in the rules of perspective*

*The practice of dissimilarity*

*It is the invention of Gulliver!*

*Everything that moves away diminishes*

*As pleasures and pains go in time*

*And if one arrives at the foot of a monument*

*that from afar one would slide into one's suitcase*

*however among humans there will always be*

*our inevitable neighbor*

*our fellow human being, more or less!*

*Since we can never escape it*

*Whether we love it or hate it,*

*How do we manage to endure it?*

*Changing dimensions, Gentlemen,*

*It is the invention of Gulliver!*

The practice of this *gaucherie disciplinée* refers to the impertinence of Satyrs from antiquity. Unlike many figures of mythology, such as centaurs who have a very specific genealogy, the origin of Satyrs is not the subject of detailed accounts. They are at most a race of good-for-nothings, *outside linear time and birth*. The satyric drama consists of grafting onto a given and well-known story a group of Satyrs who react. The incongruous and insolent play is literally a collage on the serious narrative that



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operates an effect of subversion of the tragic, a distancing. For example, at wrestling, equestrian events, foot races, the perfectly Satyric program is biting and twisting testicles. The Satyr's body is a constantly erect body in motion to evoke not their fertility but their submission to appetites, whether gastric or sexual; it is as unstable in its postures as in its gestures, crouching, crawling, or on all fours, opposed to the body of the citizen or the athlete; it is, in short, a body sensitive in unison with nature.

In Cezary Bodzianowski's work, the relationship to nature emerges from a duel organized with culture. The sequence of **Signals** opens with the sound sign of an air conditioner starting up, under which the artist seems to be taking a nap next to a partially open window. The sounds of traffic from motor vehicles outside penetrate the confined space of his hotel room. Bodzianowski then engages in a kind of refrain, producing the sound echoes of car horns and sirens until the air conditioner stops, signaling the end of the performance. In **Alter Fuego**, the artist undertakes a sonic battle in a wire mesh cage with a welded aluminum shelf. The percussive sound of interactions between the enclosed protagonists metamorphoses the artist into a creature mastering its prey. In **H20000**, the act of drinking from the faucet without using a glass is performed in the presence of a shapeless object that moves with each intrusion of the artist into the bathroom. The well-known renunciation by Diogenes to use his cup (civilization) to drink, instead observing a child drinking with his hands (nature), is replayed here by the artist as a ritual reinforced by the supernatural presence in the bathroom of a being defying gravity.

**Madonna Europa** replays the current European drama in two successive scenes. The Union, stunned by migratory crises and challenged in its cultural hegemony, is initially represented by the transformation of the starred flags into a symbol of shock — as often depicted in comics — on the head of the artist staggering in his bed. But one quickly thinks also of the saintly halo that divides the head of Mary, which here presents itself as an unexpected return of repressed European Christianity imprinted on the flags of nations. The next scene shows a more threatening European horizon than ever before, with Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* resounding over the glow of flames at the borders. **Lacrimosa**, a genre scene capturing the artist in a recent urban passage in Naples, completes the daily tragedy hovering like levitation over a Europe doomed to atone for its sins.

**Allora Vero**, the indigenous expression punctuating conversations in Naples, becomes the face value of a new numismatic proposed by the artist, made from chocolate presented in gold packaging pierced at the center and engraved with this popular expression. Once again, one thinks of Diogenes and the exile he had to endure following his conviction for currency forgery in Sinope, where he worked at the bank.

But as Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé indicates: «By resorting to counterfeiting, Diogenes invites us to see realities usually considered evils such as exile, slavery, or poverty differently: he transforms his own exile into an invitation to philosophy; reduced to slavery, he claims to know how to command men, and his disciple Crates strips himself of all his wealth in order to truly live the cynical lifestyle.»

Marek Konieczny's *Santa Conversazione* closes the exhibition's journey by welcoming the audience into a space that engages in dialogue with Cezary Bodzianowski's practice, both past and present, as this shared passion with his professor for things that shine but do not necessarily have the value attributed to them. Konieczny simulated gold and religion in a communist society that banned their



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use and practice. Bodzianowski, by displaying himself alongside a scathing Neapolitan graffiti in **TOURISTA INFAME**, stigmatizes the transformation by tourism of itineraries into curious beasts.

In Cezary Bodzianowski's work, the minting of a chocolate coin becomes the condition of his artistic practice, and like for the cynical philosophers, counterfeiting becomes his guarantee of authenticity.

Athens, April 2024.

Extract from

Giorgio Agamben

*Pulcinella ovvero Divertimento per li ragazzi: in quattro scene*

Illustrazioni di Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo  
nottetempo, 2016

ISBN 8874526369, 9788874526369

Pierre Klossowski

*Robert et Gulliver. Suivi d'une Lettre à Michel Butor*

Fata Morgana, 1987

ISBN 2851942514, 978-2851942517



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### Practical information

Opening date: 11.05.2024

Closing date: 27.07.2024

Opening: Saturday 11.05.2024 from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm, free entrance

Location: Fondazione Morra Greco, Largo Proprio di Avellino 17, 80138 Napoli (NA)

Opening hours: from Thursday to Saturday, from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm – latest entrance 5:30 pm

Free entrance.

### CONTACTS

For interview requests, high-resolution images, and more information, please contact

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