

CARLO GABRIELE TRIBBIOLI

TOWARDS THE ALTAR OF A GOD UNKNOWN

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OPENING: THURSDAY FEBRUARY 8, 6 PM

FEDERICA SCHIAVO GALLERY MILANO
VIA MICHELE BAROZZI 6 MILANO

Federica Schiavo Gallery is pleased to present *Towards the altar of a god unknown*, Carlo Gabriele Tribbioli's second solo exhibition with the gallery. The show will feature different elements of an extensive research brought forward by the artist between 2011 and 2016 in collaboration with Federico Lodoli, film director and researcher in philosophy. The exhibition is structured to create a suspended atmosphere and invites the public to allow some time for their visit to fully investigate the works.

The latter originate from a study on the war, considered in its unavoidable and universal dimension, as a real and archetypal event. The phenomenon has been studied by the authors through in-field investigations in Liberia, a country which has experienced radical, specific and inconclusive conflicts, where in different laps of time between October 2011 and March 2014, they shot *Frammento 53*. Methods and results of the research have exceeded the footage dimension having assembled a monumental amount of experiences, testaments, names, images, information, ideas therefore a further elaboration has taken different final forms: the book *Towards the altar of a god unknown - Liberian notes* (published by Humboldt Books Milano, realized with the support of Fondazione Baruchello and pre-released for the show), the graphic works of the series *Altars* and *Archive 2011-2016*, and a selected collection of relevant matters.

In the first room, Tribbioli exhibits *Altars*, graphic works on paper and glass in iron frames. The works follow a specific composition scheme, a figurative synthesis of the three reference points used in the study: the *conflict* seen as cosmological power, depicted as gods of war portraits; the investigation *field*, a photographic series of key locations and specific symbols and a *nomenclature* which informs all the names, places and dates of the experience.

Towards the altar of a god unknown - Liberian notes is structured in three complementary yet autonomous chapters: *The night of man* by Federico Lodoli introduces the theoretical background that led the process; *Toward the altar of a god unknown* by Carlo Gabriele Tribbioli is the collection of journey memories, interviews extracts and photographs shot in field and *Historical Appendix* by Laura Borsi assists the reader in the comprehension of the intricate Liberian history. Finally *Archive 2001-2016* is an hand crafted container, built to gather original evidences and travel finds collected by the authors.

In the second room, a home-theatre has been staged for the viewing of *Frammento 53*. The film develops through a series of selected first-hand accounts of significant warriors, generals and warlords. Seven portraits are shown in sequence, always introduced by the voice-off statement of the authors and terminated by nocturnal images used as the backdrop for a set of quotations from former General Philip Wlue. Through the harsh and restless use of the hand held camera, always tight on their bodies and faces, a continuous tension between the fighters' accounts and the viewer is achieved. Any personal and historical context is excluded from their narration in order to elevate their stories to a universal and impersonal dimension.

Produced by the Centre d'Art Contemporain - Genève, Federica Schiavo Gallery and Ring Film, *Frammento 53* was premiered at the Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement - Genève in 2014 and screened in several film festivals, such as: Frames of Representation, ICA, London; Art of the Real, Film Society of Lincoln Center, New York; CPH:DOX, Copenhagen; Doclisboa, Lisbon; FID Marseille; Göteborg Film Festival; 16a Quadriennale d'Arte in Rome.

Excerpts from *The night of man* by Federico Lodoli

Almost all the ancient civilisations refer to the rupture of an original state that marks the start of the cosmos. In which the all-indistinct is torn and the equilibrium is broken: that's where life really starts. According to Hesiod, before anything else there was *Chaos*, from which everything emerges through an ongoing battle between divine powers. Similar myths on the origins of the world may be found in Hittite cuneiform texts from the 13th century BC, telling of the antagonisms between the divinities Alalu, Anu and Kumarbi, and in the *Enuma Elish*, the Babylonian poem of creation, which tells of the clash between the god-king Marduk and Tiamat, the mother godhead. Lastly, in Judo-Christian theology, what introduces the division in things is not God, the pacifier, but the Devil, the separator. These visions refer to chaos as the shapeless matter of the cosmos, that which makes life possible and without which the world would be an inanimate desert. This is because life is conceived as the eternal unfolding of a productive power of antagonistic effects, a disorder that is not characterised in negative terms but as the primordial condition of creation, a virtual that contains all the possible forms. Within this framework, conflict acts as the original principle of separation of all things, the tool with which the whole shapes itself, the force through which each thing is. The eternal and cyclical change, its development through the ceaseless struggle between powers, the placement of everything in accordance with its own nature: these are the elements of mythical thought in which this vision is couched.

It's in Heraclitus's fragment 53 that the most powerful philosophical formula is found, that which has echoed inexorably for thousands of years: "War is the father of all and the king of all; and some he has made gods and some men, some bond and some free." The fragment indicates the truth according to which conflict, the *polemos*, is shown to be the primordial component of being, the dynamic that underpins the structure of the universe, of existence and of thought. It means that without conflict there is nothing, because *polemos* is the original principle that comes before all else, the laceration of the unity that allows for the unfolding of life itself. It is a vision of conflict as a force of separation through which all must be measured, for it is the struggle itself that allows things to differentiate. Everything in our world takes on a position and acquires a sense of its own by virtue of this laceration. The struggle is right because it is the criterion by which things become things among things, each finding its proper place in nature. It's the world without ideals, the world for what it is.

[...] The history of man may be told as the history of his wars. A process in which conflict is at the same time the principle of destruction and that of creation, the force deployed in the founding moments of cultures and the privileged tool in the processes of identity determination. War as a blind and brutal law, alternation of dawns and sunsets, inexorable force that moves the world. War has an independent dimension in which no other law than that of the clash is applied. It is force which imposes its values and inhabits its executors, for its end and its cause lie within itself. No external reason, be it moral, historical, social or juridical, is capable of understanding it.

Carlo Gabriele Tribbioli was born in Rome, Italy in 1982. Lives and works in Rome.

Selected solo and group exhibitions: 16a Quadriennale d'Arte, Orestiade Italiana, Palazzo delle Esposizioni Rome, Italy (2016); The Registry of Promise 4: The Promise of Literature, Soothsaying and Speaking in Tongues, De Kabinetten van De Vleeshal, Middelburg, The Netherlands (2015); Moroso Concept for Contemporary Art, Villa Manin, Passariano, Codroipo, Udine (2015); Biennial of Moving Images, Hobart, Museum, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia (2015); Biennial of Moving Images, Centre d'Art Contemporain Geneve, Geneve, Switzerland (2014); Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan, Italy (2014); Viafarini DOCVA, Milan, Italy (2014); Federica Schiavo Gallery, Rome, Italy (2014); Lo schermo dell'arte Film Festival, Florence & Filmstudio, Rome, Italy (2013); Federica Schiavo Gallery, Rome, Italy (2012); Museo del Novecento, Milan, Italy (2012); MACRO Testaccio, Rome, Italy (2012); Nomas Foundation, Rome, Italy (2012); Galleria Otto Zoo, Milan, Italy (2011); Aaran Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran (2009); 5° Festival of Dance and Performance, Budapest, Hungary (2008); Italian Cultural Institute in Budapest, Hungary (2008); Auditorium Parco della Musica, Rome, Italy (2007); Fondazione Baruchello, IX Edition of the Festival Romapoesia, Rome, Italy (2006); Fondazione Baruchello, VII Edition of the Festival Romapoesia, Rome, Italy (2004).