

Christian Jankowski
Where do we go from here?

Curated by
Lorenzo Bruni

25 May – 28 September 2019

Talk with the Artist
Saturday 25 May 2019, 5 pm

Speakers
Christian Jankowski (Artist)
Lorenzo Bruni (Curator)
Lorenzo Balbi (Artistic Director MAMbo)

MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, Via Don Minzoni 14 | I - 40121 Bologna
The event is hosted on the stage of *Cavaticcio Festival* curated by Ex Forno MAMbo

Opening
Saturday 25 May 2019, 7 pm

Galleria Enrico Astuni is pleased to present *Where do we go from here?*, a solo exhibition by Christian Jankowski, curated by Lorenzo Bruni.

Alongside works in a variety of media – including painting, photography, film and installation – a new piece, specially conceived for this exhibition, comes to life through its activation by visitors. In *Where do we go from here?*, Jankowski responds to the pressures of the information age, where time and attention are at a premium. With the spread of mass media and social networks, where anyone can be the protagonist of their story – or air their dirty laundry in public – boundaries between private and public are increasingly blurred. Jankowski draws on a long-held interest in the pact between actor and spectator, performer and viewer, to propose a new perspective on public art, with implications for the concept of community and the role of the institution.

Everyday Tasks – Sphere of the Gods (2019) invites visitors to avail themselves of a washing machine installed in the gallery, accompanied by a life-size rendering of the artist's body, which serves as a drying rack. Both routine and ritual, washing is a time-worn means of meditation, and visitors are welcome to relax in the exhibition space for the duration of their laundry, with the breezy sculpture as a focus point. Filled with the hum of the spin cycle and the scent of washing powder, the gallery is refreshed as a forum for airing views on the purpose of art. The impetus behind this work was a photograph taken by Jankowski in Dafen, China, the artist village famous for producing replicas of old master paintings. In the district of studios and art suppliers, two sculptures are draped with freshly washed sheets, hung out to dry on outstretched arms. This temporary covering endows the conventional bronzes with an air of mystery, like new sculptures waiting to be unveiled. As an act of appropriation, it evokes art movements from the 20th century, which deconstruct monuments as symbols of authoritarian power, and yet the gesture stems neither from irreverence towards art nor political provocation, but from necessity. It demonstrates a seamless integration of art in daily life. Equal and opposite to the Dafen sculptures, which are transformed into implements, Jankowski's drying rack is activated as an artwork when visitors use it. The accumulation of damp fabric requires a further investment from the audience – to imagine what's beneath.

GALLERIA ENRICO ASTUNI

Bologna

Everyday Tasks – Sphere of the Gods channels key themes from earlier works, brought together in this exhibition. In *Visitors* (2010–19), comments from museum and gallery visitor books are translated into wall-mounted neons. The series started with comments from Galleria Enrico Astuni's visitor book, and has gone on to incorporate museum and gallery comments worldwide, many of which are gathered here for the first time. In this way, Jankowski highlights the part played by the audience as co-creators when viewing art in an exhibition space.

Again, switching the focus, the ongoing series *My Audience* (2003–19) consists of photographs of people attending talks or panel discussions in which the artist has been invited to speak. By turning his onlookers into objects of examination, he subverts unspoken rules of social etiquette that permit the audience to study the speaker, but not necessarily viceversa.

Where *Everyday Tasks – Sphere of the Gods* encourages the audience to bring their dirty laundry into the gallery, the earliest work included here initiates a transgression outside of the gallery space. In *Public Bath* (1992) Jankowski invited passersby to take a bath in a shop window; in other words, to perform a private activity in public. Two cameras recorded the bathers and those bystanders who happened to be watching. Later Jankowski invited the bathers to introduce the video to the exhibition audience, thus confirming their commitment. The recent series of photographs, *We are innocent when we sleep* (2018–19), captures the ensemble of the iconic Berlin theatre, the Schaubühne, while they are asleep, or seem to be sleeping. Like the drying rack modelled on the artist's body, bedecked with wet clothes, the actors allow themselves drawn on and dressed up by their colleagues. This act of submission enables the actors, so habituated to professional make-up and costume, to be seen in a new light; they lie still, do nothing, in order to be treated as canvases. In *Neue Malerei* (2017) Jankowski expands the life of a photograph image through a multilayered collaborative process. Searching online, he gathered *tableaux vivants*, in which people pose in the composition of famous paintings, and then had these photographs painted in oil on canvas, thus returning the subject to its original medium. This project took Jankowski to Dafen, where he encountered the two veiled public sculptures – thus initiating the new cycle of work on view in the present exhibition.