

Christian Jankowski. *Where do we go from here?*

Curated by
Lorenzo Bruni

25 May – 28 September 2019

Opening
Saturday 25 May 2019, 7 pm

Galleria Enrico Astuni opens on Saturday 25 May 2019 at 7 pm with Christian Jankowski's solo show, *Where do we go from here?*, curated by Lorenzo Bruni.

Christian Jankowski's new exhibition for Galleria Astuni Bologna is comprised of works realised in a variety of media. Paintings, photographs, a video and an installation share the space with a new sculpture that has been especially conceived for the show and which comes to life through its dialogue with visitors, who can decide whether to merely observe it or to 'activate' it. All the works on display reflect on the practice of collaboration. They constitute a contemplation on the interaction of art and life in a world that increasingly resembles an intangible mass-media enterprise. The novelty of these artworks lies in their mode of meta-reflection on the role of art in a globalised society and concerns the question: "Where is the audience?". A question by no means trivial. In fact, in a world free from ideologies, where everyone can be the protagonists of their own stories through the new media, it is important to ask whom they are addressing. The subjects now are the actor and the spectator, the performer and the audience. As a result, Jankowski aims to explore the mechanisms that have led to this, and, above all, the implications this new communicative perspective holds for politics, for the concept of community, for the role of the museum and for the artistic gesture.

The key to understanding Jankowski's new project lies in a photograph taken by the artist a year ago during a trip to China. The image shows a pedestrian street with two public sculptures. These sculptures are used by locals as 'implements' for drying clothes and freshly washed sheets. The district where Jankowski came upon the temporarily covered monuments is characterised by artist studios and fine art shops. The gesture of covering does not stem from irreverence towards art or from political or social provocation, it simply belongs to the sphere of everyday tasks. The appropriated sculptures reminded the artist of a scene from a ghost movie, but also of various artistic movements from the last century which looked at public monuments in order to deconstruct authoritarian power. However, the most vivid vision is of people sleepwalking. With the spread of social media networks, don't we all behave in public as if we were in private? And aren't we all increasingly absent-minded, given that we are continually engaged in multitasking actions on our personal electronic devices? This image and the exhibition title *Where do we go from here?* condense these different levels of interpretation and also ask why it might still be necessary to produce a work of art at all, in particular a public work of art. And if so for whom?

Alongside and in conjunction with the new sculpture titled *Everyday Tasks, Sphere of the Gods*, the works *Visitors*, *My Audience*, *Public Bath*, *We are innocent when we sleep* and *Neue Malerei* will be shown. *Visitors* is a series of neon works created from comments left by audiences in museum and art gallery guest books. Through these, Jankowski allows the audience to enter into a productive relationship with the art on show and the art space. The series *My Audience* consists of photographs Jankowski took of the audiences attending his talks or panel discussions where he was invited to speak. By turning these groups of onlookers into objects of examination, he subverts unspoken rules of social etiquette that permit the audience to study the speaker, but not necessarily vice versa.

GALLERIA ENRICO ASTUNI

Bologna

For the video work *Public Bath* Jankowski invited passersby to take a bath in a shop window; in other words to perform a private activity in public. Two video cameras recorded the bathers and those passing by and watching. Later Jankowski invited the bathers to introduce the video to the exhibition audience. The photographs of *We are innocent when we sleep* show the entire *ensemble* of a famous Berlin theatre asleep and in various states of transformation. Unconscious of their surroundings, they turned into canvasses for their fellow actors. *Neue Malerei*, Jankowski's appropriation of *tableaux vivants* of famous paintings created and posted on the Internet by people from all over the world, is the project that took him to China, where the two public sculptures he encountered became the inspiration for his new exhibition in Bologna.