



Piazza Mafalda di Savoia, 10098 Rivoli (Torino)  
tel. 011.9565222 / 9565220

**Exhibition**

***The Rock Furniture.  
Design by GUFRAM in the Rock Years***

**Curator**

Franco Mello

**Press Office**

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Alessandra Santerini, Consultant  
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**Press preview  
Opening  
Dates**

Monday, May 20, 2002, 11.30 a.m.  
Tuesday, May 21, 2002, 7.00 p.m.  
May 22 – September 1, 2002

**Hours**

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Saturday and Sunday, 10.00 a.m. – 7.00 p.m.  
1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month, 10 a.m. – 10 p.m.

**Entrance**

€ 6.20 full price, € 4.13 reduced price

**Location**

Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea  
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This exhibition re-examines the work of a group of designers, architects, artists and a small company, GUFGRAM, that, with its multiples, had an impact on the history of design worldwide. In fact the pieces in the "Multiples" collection, still in production in limited editions, can be seen at MOMA in New York, at the Museum of Modern Art in Denver, at the Louvre in Paris and in the permanent exhibition of Italian Design in Milan.

GUFGRAM, founded in 1966 by the Guglielmetto brothers, developed during a period of great creative ferment, characterized on the one hand by the rise of art movements such as Pop Art, and on the other by the social changes that erupted in '68 and the birth of Arte Povera. It was precisely in that year that the company began its production of design objects, with Giuseppe Raimondi's *Alvar* armchair (designed in 1965). The work of other designers and artists (such as Piero Gilardi) followed, with the creation of relationships increasingly in tune with the art world. Their numbers included designers such as Mendini, Pettena and Lazzeroni, who are represented in this exhibition by documents and prototypes.

This is the first opportunity, since the exhibition *Italy, the New Domestic Landscape*, held at MOMA in New York in 1973, for the Italian public to experience a fully documented overview of GUFGRAM's historical production and its more recent creations.

Visitors to Castello di Rivoli's Manica Lunga will be able to admire pieces such as the *Pratone* (large meadow), the *Bocca* (mouth), the *Cactus* and the *Sassi* (rocks), which have become veritable symbols of an era. In addition to these "cult" objects, prototypes will be exhibited that never entered into production but have been seen in museums, installations and toys created for children.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a "sound track" of rock music that the public will be able to hear through headphones. The catalogue, with texts by Ennio Chiggio, Stefano Casciani and Gianni Pettena, also contains a numbered edition of 250 copies. The cover has been created by Pietro Perotti, based on a design by Franco Mello. The exhibition installation is by the architect Giuseppe Messina.

### Extract from Ennio Chiggio's text in the catalogue

[...] in 1966 the Gugliermetto brothers, who worked in the field of so-called "modern" interior design, went into partnership. As the company name, they chose the acrostic Gu-fra-m (**G**ugliermetto - **f**ratelli - **m**obile). Their activities were part of a surge of artistic activity leading up to that legendary year of protest, 1968, whose events touched even the peaceful shores of the furniture industry. The impact was not traumatic, for the Gugliermetto brothers were also involved in the protests. With their team of skilled designers they exhibited at the Salone del Mobile, Milan's International Furniture Fair. The collaboration between a large group of designers, artists and architects, some of whom were already making a name for themselves, began in 1966. They included Derossi, Ceretti, Rosso, Studio 65, Gilardi, Mello, Drocco, Pettena, Raimondi, Nespolo, Bistagnino, Cusimano, De Ferrari, Lazzeroni and Mendini. Beginning with Piero Gilardi's seating, *I Sassi (The Rocks)*, Gufram launched its *Multipli* series, indulging in a touch of ironic humour with the production of a decal sheet featuring the various Gufram products. Thus the world of art made its lofty entrance into the well-ordered realm of craftsmanship and industrial production. Now the artisan/visual artist spanned the different disciplines, a role that was tailor-made for Piero Gilardi. With access to all areas of the business he coordinated the bizarre projects that turned up at the door with the manufacturing capabilities of the Gugliermetto brothers' workshop. The word "*multipli*"\* mocked the assumption of the manufacturing industry, which has always been based on mass-production, that the golden age of the one-off *objet d'art* had gone for ever. In actual fact, it meant quite the opposite. Driven by a team of experts, from 1970 to 1973 the firm produced outrageous designs like *Cactus* (a coat-hanger), *Bocca* (a lip-shaped sofa), *Pratone* (a seating unit), and *Capitello* (an easy chair in the form of the capital of a column). These were immediately pounced on by the media, always hungry for innovation. The Gugliermetto brothers, under the banner of Gufram, worked tirelessly and energetically with these "swinging furniture makers", promoting themselves and the ideas that continuously landed up on the workbenches of their small firm. But reduced demand for innovation in the furniture sector forced the company to review its development plans. Between 1974 and 1976 Gufram tested the mass market with more "reassuring" designs.

While many small businesses were plunged into an alternating cycle of boom and bust, with tightened budgets and spectacular market losses, Gufram's uncomplicated entrepreneurial style and sheer grit and determination enabled the firm to enjoy its most influential period. The company showed great social commitment, concentrating on the production of equipment/toys for nursery schools, playgroups and children's playgrounds, attracting the interest of institutions and local authorities in its products. Outstanding among these was the series of playground objects manufactured for Planula, designed by Mello and made by Gilardi. Here, children can play with large polyurethane fruit dangling from different heights.

## ***ULTRAPOP or ORPHANS OF THE FUTURE***

Italian design was a child of the Fifties, born amid the ebullience of the democratic and antifascist revolution, raised under the illusion of a possible welfare state and therefore paradoxically associated with the ideology of the dominant classes – the petty and middle bourgeoisie. But it has been in a permanent state of crisis since the end of the Sixties; divested of its populist dimension when it became apparent that there was no alternative to the consumer system, this singular form of expression, mid-way between artistic provocation and subservience to marketing, today seems increasingly lost – both intellectually and practically – as it faces an unprecedented phenomenon: the loss of interest in shape as a marketable commodity, due the fact that the capitalist system had finally triumphed over socialist ideology, which is at the very root of design. Now, television, computers and the virtual world offer endless development and earning potential, and the formal design of shapes has very little influence over them.

In place of the affluent international bourgeoisie targeted by classic “design products”, today we see the emergence of an IT/telecommunications hungry proletariat, ready to gobble up unimaginable quantities of images, and also shapes – real and virtual. This marks the end even of the interest in the cultural “Imaginary”, which includes Pop Art, through which avant-garde art managed, perhaps for the last time, to capture the attention of the world. Between the Sixties and the Seventies, avant-garde design reached a pinnacle, producing a remarkable quantity of “historical” modern objects, both orthodox and heterodox: from Doney, Algol and Black TVs by Zanuso and Sapper for Brionvega to Sacco di Gatti, Paolini and Teodoro, from Munari’s Falkland lamp to Cactus by Drocco and Mello for Gufram, from Valle’s Cifra 3 clock for Solari to Joe armchair by de Pas, D’Urbino and Lomazzi for Poltronova and so on. The list of objects that embody a stance and a forward-looking attitude, as was possible then, is unending. [...]

Stefano Casciani



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**Exhibition**

***Bruna Esposito***

**Curator**

Marcella Beccaria

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**New art at Castello di Rivoli. *Bruna Esposito***

**Curated by Marcella Beccaria**

**Press preview Monday, May 20, 2002, 11:30 a.m.**

**May 22 – September 1, 2002**

The Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art has inaugurated a new exhibition series that expands the program of solo shows dedicated to the recent generation of artists. During 2002 the museum will present the work of three artists who are now receiving international acclaim. The Francesco Vezzoli exhibition (which continues until May 5<sup>th</sup>) will be followed by exhibitions of the work of Bruna Esposito, and, in September, Thomas Demand. Curated by Marcella Beccaria, this series is held in the historic rooms of the second floor of the Castello, with the goal of establishing a dialogue with the 18<sup>th</sup>-century spaces and with the works in the Museum's permanent collection. Each exhibition is accompanied by a monograph.

Bruna Esposito was born in Rome in 1960. She has lived in New York and Berlin and currently lives and works in Rome. Winner of a fellowship at P.S.1 in New York, she has participated in international survey shows such as Documenta in Kassel (1997) and the Venice Biennale (1999). On the latter occasion, along with other Italian artists, she won the Golden Lion award for best national representation. Esposito's work is based on interventions, often set in urban contexts, where a destabilizing element is crucial, sometimes in the form of a variation in tone, from the poetic to the ironic. In 1985 she created *The Canoe in Flight (La Canoa in Volo)*, which, suspended in the air, traversed the canals of Berlin. In 1988 she created *Watercolor (Aquarell)*, a bench built with mirror-planks in a nettle bush. She has returned to the theme of the bench on subsequent occasions and in different versions, as with the floating bench shown at the recent Venice Biennale. Bruna Esposito's research develops an analysis of the role of art as an element of confrontation and reflection upon social and cultural themes that characterize our time. In 1993 she created *The Holy Family (La Sagrada Familia)*, a performance that featured a walk through a working-class market in Rome by a family made up of a Black father and a White mother pushing a baby carriage that held a fish. The artist's expressive investigation in some cases joins a provocative manner with the rigor of utopian projects. Taking advantage of two fellowships awarded to her by the IBA in Berlin (1987-1989), she created a work based on the designing of new types of public toilets that allow ecological recycling, without waste. The artist transforms these facilities into places filled with greenery, water and light. The exhibition at Castello di Rivoli will be Esposito's first solo exhibition in an Italian museum and will include two recent installations and a new work conceived for the museum spaces. This will be an occasion for a direct encounter with the work of this artist, who always requires that she personally experience a high degree of physical and psychological involvement, which she conveys to the viewer. The first monograph dedicated to Esposito will be published in conjunction with the exhibition.

From the text in the catalogue

As part of the preparations for her exhibition at Castello di Rivoli, I met with Bruna Esposito in February of 2002, in her apartment in Rome, a sun-filled studio that contains parts and fragments of some of her works, placed on shelves or carefully stored in boxes and crates. Our conversations continued, sometimes by fax and/or e-mail, during the subsequent months, while winter gave way to spring, and the pages of the newspapers constantly reported new war communiqués.

Marcella Beccaria: In *Aureole (Halos)*, as in many of your works, the wires left exposed and easily visible connect the work to a solar panel, mounted so it can generate sufficient energy to provide the piece with its dynamic component. The photovoltaic cells, the cables and the battery become sculptural elements, which hold within themselves the utopia of alternative energy. In this way, is your manifest exposition of the apparatus that generates energy also a nostalgic component for a recent past, capable of pursuing its own illusions?

Bruna Esposito: Do you know how they say 'we are tied by a subtle thread...' You will agree with me that many wars happen in order to conquer the sources and pipelines for oil, methane, uranium and whatever is indispensable to the functioning of what we call 'progress'. Solar or wind energy can never be 'alternative'... but in the meantime could be integrated. With far-sightedness. The large oil companies are the only ones in a position to cover the production costs of photovoltaic cells. They are the ones to decide 'how much' and 'when'.

There is no nostalgia, we are not harboring any illusions, and soon we will have few alternatives, other than, perhaps, the necessity to make investments with the firm conviction that it is much more profitable to operate at a loss...

**Elenco opere in mostra**  
***Exhibition Checklist***

*Aureole (Halos)*, 1999

sculture cinetiche: pesci e molluschi essiccati, moduli fotovoltaici, travertino, batteria, motori elettrici, bottiglia in vetro / kinetic sculptures: dried fishes and mollusks, photovoltaic modules, travertine, battery, electric motors, glass bottle

*Sala d'aspetto (Waiting Room)*, 1999

alambicchi, fornelli elettrici, bicchieri e imbuto in vetro, buste in plastica, ventilatori, panche, pianta di rosmarino, quotidiani, tende veneziane, timer, sabbia, piastre in marmo / alembics, hot plates, glass cups and funnels, plastic bags, fans, benches, rosemary plant, newspapers, venetian blinds, timer, sand, marble slabs

*Sereno-variabile (Serene-variable)*, 2002

musica di / music by Stefano Maria Longobardi

diamanti mandarini, ciuffolotti messicani, canarino del Mozambico, canarino del Capo, incardellato, canarini sassoni, aste in ferro, uccelliere, ventilatori, timer, lettori CD, speakers, cuffie audio, CD / Mandarin zebrafinches, Mexican bullfinches, Mozambique canary, Cape canary, goldfinch, Saxon canaries, iron staffs, birdcages, fans, timer, CD players, speakers, headphones, CD



**Exhibition**

**Francis Alijs. Matrix.2**

**Curator**

Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev

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**Software: ET Infotree Advanced Edition, ET Electronic Telecommunications**  
**We would like to thank Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut**

**Francis Alijs. *Matrix.2***

**Curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev**

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Francis Aljys, born in 1959 in Antwerp, has lived and worked in Mexico City since 1987. After studying in Belgium and at the Institute of Architecture in Venice, he began exhibiting in 1990 and had his first solo exhibition in New York in 1995. He has participated in numerous international survey shows, including the V Biennial de la Habana, Cuba, 1994; *NowHere*, Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark; and *Inclusion / Exclusion*, Steirischer Herbst '96, Graz, Austria, 1996. In 1998 he participated in numerous group shows, including the Sao Paulo Biennial, Brazil; *Loose Threads*, Serpentine Gallery, London; and *Mexellente*, the Yerba Center for the Arts, San Francisco, USA. The following year he exhibited at the Istanbul Biennial, the 48<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, the Melbourne Biennial; and the group show *Mirror's Edge* at the Bildmuseet in Umeå; the Vancouver Art Gallery; Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art; and the Tramway Gallery in Glasgow. His projects in alternative art spaces include an intervention for the web site of the Dia Center for the Arts, New York, 1998, and *1-866-FREE MATRIX* at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, 2001. *Matrix.2*, now presented at Castello di Rivoli, is the first project of this type by Aljys in Europe. This year he is a finalist for the Guggenheim Museum in New York's prestigious Hugo Boss Prize. In 2003 the Centro de Arte Contemporanea Reina Sofia in Madrid will hold a solo exhibition of the artist's work.

***Matrix.2***

*Matrix.2* is a work that is located in an institutional space but, at the same time, is projected beyond the institution's physical boundaries. In fact, the artist introduces himself into the communications system of the museum institution, utilizing the coordinates of the telephone call center system, the ET Infotree Advanced Edition of the ET Electronic Telecommunications used at Castello di Rivoli. The public, after dialing a pre-established museum telephone number (**+39-011-9565255, toll-free from Italy 800-180281**), will enter a labyrinthine system of automatic responses, like those now normally in use in offices. However, after the ritual "welcome," callers are presented with disquieting options.

"If you know where you want to go, press 1"; "If you want to know where to go, press 2"; "If you go where you are knowing, press 3"; "If you know where you are going, press 4."

Thus entry into an unknown universe begins for the visitor, where the voices of a man and a woman evoke and refer to Good, Evil, destiny, joy, and grief. We are asked to choose, pressing the key corresponding to our opinion; these are choices that seem definitive and have to do with the fate of mankind. *Matrix.2* is the first project curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, new Chief Curator of the Museum.