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Mark Leckey: Creative Chaos

Marcella Beccaria

Mark Leckey moves with the same agility among frames from the film *Blade Runner*, videos o/ music gatherings in England in the 1980s, including in his research Jeff Koons' *Rabbit*, 1986, and the comics character Felix the Cat. Inside and outside the art system, Leckey uses both museum spaces and underground bars, since his approach intentionally brings together languages that seem to belong to separate worlds. Whatever the object of his attention, Leckey investigates both the obvious and the more obscure, deconstructing them to then reconfigure new interpretations through unusual connections and unexpected references. His method generates a creative chaos, a “soup” that is not primordial, but rather cultural, capable of inundating viewers but also nurturing them, literally providing them with fresh “food for thought”.

Acting as a free agent, unbound by any specific medium, Leckey plays with his own music band, just as he indiscriminately uses video, film, sculpture, sound and two-dimensional images, bringing together in a unique artistic identity the professional characteristics of a rocker, a scholar and a guru. Thus while he proposes new theories, developed perhaps in the solitude of the studio, Leckey seeks out contact with the public, entertaining it with theatrical effects and a language characterized by controlled silences. Naturally without boundaries and suitable for the most total freedom of experimentation, the field of performance is probably the area in which the artist succeeds in most fully taking advantage of, in the same place and time, the many facets that make up his personality and his composite field of artistic inquiry.

In response to the invitation to show at Castello di Rivoli, Leckey has developed *La coda lunga*, a new version of *In the Long Tail (Nella coda lunga)*, an ongoing series of performances. Part lecture, part concert, the action unfolds in the Castello theater and takes its title and inspiration from the "long tail" – the economic theory that explains the various outcomes of sales of the same product on the Internet rather than through traditional distribution in shops or supermarkets. Accompanied by two performers, the artist analyzes the peculiarities of the “tail”, dwelling on the nature and the experience of a space continually redefined by the impulses of a nearly infinite number of users. “The long tail – he says – is the form that digital desire leaves on a graph. On the Internet we can go beyond the mainstream – the ‘head’ – and into the endless.” During the course of his exploration, he investigates the appeal of a dimension that is free from physical constrictions, at the same time probing its darkest and most unhealthy recesses. From the earliest experiments with television broadcasts, beginning with an image of Felix the Cat, up to the current You Tube channel and the most morbidly self-referential aspects of a world made up of dematerialized images, Leckey behaves like an academic who is presenting the results of his own research, but also like a magician who enchants, confuses and in the end seduces.