

PRESS RELEASE

EXHIBITION

HUM

Massimo Bartolini

March 1st – May 19th, 2013



Jagannath

DATES

March 1st – May 19th, 2013

VENUE

First floor exhibition rooms

VISITING HOURS

Tuesdays to Saturdays (including bank holidays) from 11am to 2.30pm and from 5pm to 9pm

Sundays, from 11am to 2.30pm

Closed on Mondays

PRODUCED BY

Fondazione Musica per Roma



CURATED BY

Anna Cestelli Guidi

PRESENTATION

Massimo Bartolini's show **HUM**, curated by Anna Cestelli Guidi, inaugurated a new exhibition project of the Fondazione Musica per Roma devoted to the art of sound. This exhibition pays homage to Glenn Gould (1932-1982), and includes two new sound installations —*HUM*, and *Singing North*— constructed around two Gould's pieces: the humming of the Canadian musician in the second recording of the *Goldberg Variations* (1981); and the contrapuntal radio documentary *The Idea of North* (1967), an interview programme produced by Gould on the geographic — and philosophical — concept of the North.

Lettura, a performance created specifically for the MARCO's venue, pays tribute to Gould by reading aloud *The Loser*, the renowned novel by Thomas Bernhard. It will also take place during the opening *Phonology of noise: the voice as sound object*, live streaming aural transmission of experimental sound artists from the website of *Radical Matters - Editions/Label series*.

OPENING on Friday, 1st of March

During the opening events, ADEGAS GALEGAS cordially invites our guests to a wine tasting, 2011 D. Pedro de Soutomaior



SUMMARY OF THE EXHIBITION PROJECT

Massimo Bartolini's show **HUM**, inaugurated the new exhibition project of the Fondazione Musica per Roma devoted to the art of sound, *One Space/One Sound*, a periodical project of three exhibitions a year for the AuditoriumArte venue.

Sound has always played an important role in the work of Massimo Bartolini who here presents **HUM**, an exhibition that pays tribute to one of the most brilliant and visionary personalities of the 20th century: Glenn Gould (1932-1982), on the occasion of the celebrations which took place in 2012 as an homage to the artist's birth 80th Anniversary and the 30th Anniversary of his death.

Massimo Bartolini's two installations —*HUM*, and *Singing North*— are constructed around two Gould's pieces: the humming of the Canadian musician in the second recording of the *Goldberg Variations* (1981); and the contrapuntal radio documentary *The Idea of North* (1967), an interview programme produced by Gould on the geographic — and philosophical — concept of the North.

Gould's famous humming from the 1981 recording of the *Goldberg Variations*, the *HUM*, is transformed here into an autonomous vocal score interpreted by the baritone Nicholas Isherwood. Bartolini's sound installation, specifically adapted to MARCO's first floor galleries — the walls are painted with colors corresponding to the G Major tonalities, the dominant theme in the *Goldberg Variations* — transforms the exhibition spaces in a surprising and unexpected way, creating an atmosphere of intimate beauty that only comes to life in the presence of voice: a bodiless voice which, stripped of the ego of the artist's presence, now finds its ultimate meaning in the presence and interpretation of the audience.

With respect to the radio documentary piece, the cooperation between Bartolini and Isherwood has resulted in the installation *Singing North*. Here, several fragments of Gould's original text —philosophical and poetical descriptions on the Northern Canadians isolated life— are recreated and used as a *libretto*.

Lettura, a performance created specifically for the MARCO's venue, pays tribute to Gould by reading aloud *The Loser*, the renowned novel by Thomas Bernhard. It will also take place during the opening *Phonology of noise: the voice as sound object*, live streaming aural transmission of experimental sound artists from the website of *Radical Matters - Editions/Label series*. A selection of works by artists that have been experimenting with the voice since the late 70's. This recording is available at MARCO's library.

With this exhibition, MARCO, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Vigo, takes another step in a tendency of projects related to the art of sound. This interest has been reflected in several exhibitions such as 'The Invisible Show' (2006), 'Escoitar.org' (2007), or Loreto Martínez Troncoso's solo show within the series 'Entering the Work' (2011), as well as the presence of sound works and installations in numerous projects or group shows produced by MARCO.

WORKS EXHIBITED

***Hum*, 2012**

Recording, one-off, on 12-inch vinyl record picture disk format. Produced by Fondazione Musica per Roma. Edited and published by *Radical Matters - Editions/Label*. Voice: Nicholas Isherwood, mural painting, record player, amplifier, speakers

***Singing North*, 2012**

Audio recording composed and executed by Nicholas Isherwood, microphone, stand, speaker, audience, drawing 500 x 270 cm

***Lettura*, 2013**

Person, mp3

CATALOGUE

On the occasion of this exhibition, Fondazione Musica per Roma & Magazzino Arte Moderna, Rome, have published a catalogue which includes an audio CD of the two sound works, and a DVD recording of the baritone Nicholas Isherwood playing HUM.

***HUM*. Catalogue, CD, DVD**

Published by: Fondazione Musica per Roma & Magazzino Arte Moderna, Rome, 2013

CURATORIAL TEXT

"Sound has always played an important role in the work of Massimo Bartolini who here presents **HUM**, an exhibition that pays homage to one of the most brilliant and visionary personalities of the 20th century: Glenn Gould.

It is not so much Gould the musician that interests Bartolini, as the non-conformist Gould, a man who abandoned a dazzling career at its peak, shutting himself off completely from the world in the great North to 'communicate only through the recording studio'. It was Gould's way of pursuing a theoretical and speculative course centered on a non-presence, on the transmission of thought as pure voice, by experimenting with the potentialities offered by the new electronic media, from the technique of montage to the recording of radio broadcasts.

The new technological procedures of the recording studio allowed this visionary Canadian artist to achieve that 'global embrace beyond time and space' that his friend Marshall McLuhan had written about in his pioneer essay on the new electronic media *Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man*, published in 1964, the same year that Gould left the stage. At the same time technology enabled him to enact the 'death of the author' theorized in those years by French post-structuralist thought and to 'free', in the words of Roland Barthes, the text/work from its traditional association with the author/artist and seek its ultimate significance in its destination, in other words the reader, the listener.

Massimo Bartolini's two installations are dedicated to Glenn Gould's 'love affair with the microphone' – as it has recently been defined – but more in general to the idea of the recording, both as presence and distance communication. The installations are constructed around the evocative power of the Canadian musician's voice in the second recording of the *Goldberg Variations* and in the contrapuntal radio documentary *The Idea of North*.

What Bartolini stages in **HUM** is a bodiless presence, pure sound: the empty space, transformed into a synesthetic ambience painted with colors corresponding to the G Major tonalities, the dominant theme in the *Goldberg Variations*, only comes alive through the murmuring, the senseless phonemes marking the rhythm of the musical phrasing. Gould's famous humming from the 1981 recording, the HUM, is transformed into an autonomous vocal score interpreted by the baritone Nicholas Isherwood: powerfully evocative pure sounds animate the space, break up and are recomposed in memory, in the perception of the listener. Meanwhile the ecstatic smile of Jagannath – the form of Krishna associated with sleep and the night – with wide-open eyes, continues to turn hypnotically on the vinyl of the picture disk, creating the same effect that the *Variations* played by Goldberg must have had on the sleepless count for whom Bach composed them.

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Similarly, *Singing North*, the collage composed and interpreted by Nicholas Isherwood, who used the original text of the 1967 broadcast as his point of departure, takes Gould's contrapuntal idea in this piece to the extreme, leaving the individual imagination and perception to freely unfold before a white wall that literally sings, the ideal neutral surface to receive the projections of the spectator/listener.

The process of recording, as the absence of a narrator in person, permits the story to unfold without faces, or figurative constraints. The absence of the subject becomes thus the premise for something that can be shared by all, making possible that embrace with the world, with a global community consisting in the coexistence of voices, able of projecting the listener into a shared dimension, unhindered by compromises with authorship and authority: the *North* perhaps, as indicated by Gould, with its mythical image of utopia and freedom, drawn by the artist as a memo on one of the rays of the great green map."

Anna Cestelli Guidi

[Curator of the exhibition]

GENERAL INFORMATION

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Massimo Bartolini (Cecina, Italy, 1962)

Solo Exhibitions (selection 2010-2013)

- 2013 *Studio Matters + 1*, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edimburgh, UK / S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium
- 2011 *Basements*, Galleria Massimo de Carlo, Milan, Italy; *Serce na Dloni*, Centre of Contemporary Art Znaki Czasu, Torun, Poland (curated by D. Denegri)
- 2010 *Dews*, Institute for Contemporary Art Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria (curated by I. Boubnova); *-2+3: La collezione di Museion* (with S. Arienti), Museion Bolzano, Italy (curated by F. Carazzato and L. Ragaglia)

Group Exhibitions (selection 2010-2013)

- 2012 *Etchigo-Tsumari Triennial*, Tokamachi, Japan (curated by Art Front); Documenta 13, Kassel, Germany (curated by C. C. Bakargiev); TRACK, Ghent, Belgium (curated by Philippe Van Cauteren and Mirjam Varadinis)
- 2011 *Yokohama 2011: International Triennial of Contemporary Art*, Yokohama, Japan (curated by Akiko Miki); *Terre Vulnerabili*, Hangar Bicocca, Milan, Italy (curated by C. Bertola); *Sotto quale cielo?*, Museo Riso, Palermo, Italy (curated by D. Bigi); *The Edge of Becoming*, Palazzo Fortuny, Venecia, Italy (curated by A. Vervhort, R. Martinez, D. Ferretti)

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Anna Cestelli Guidi, born in Rome, studied Art History between Roma and Berlín. Since 2006 she is responsible of Visual Arts in Fondazione Musica per Roma, Auditorium de Roma, where - among other projects - she has created and curated the programme *Artist's Corner*, on the relationship between sound art and visual arts. She also coordinated the project *Fluxus Biennial* 2010-2011 and curated its performance section. In november 2012 she started the project *One Space / One Sound*, devoted to the art of sound, which was inaugurated with Massimo Bartolini's exhibition, *HUM*.

GUIDED TOURS

The staff members in the rooms are at visitors' disposal for any question they may have or information they may need about the exhibition, as well as for the usual guided tours:

- Every day at 6pm
- Customised visits for groups by appointment. Please call 986 113900

Should you need further information, please contact:
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