

QU.

A project by Luca Cerizza for Galleria Massimo Minini

Three questions = three exhibitions

Question n.2 (Pantone 201U):

IN WHAT CITY?

MANFRED PERNICE SEAN SNYDER

Opening

February 1, 6:00 pm

February 1 through
March 23, 2003

The second appointment in the series **QU.** presents a collaboration between German artist Manfred Pernice and American artist, for years a resident of Germany, Sean Snyder. Albeit with totally different modalities and formal results, both Pernice and Snyder have for years been investigating the linguistic structures that characterize the urban landscapes of modernity and contemporaneity.

Their research concentrates in particular on the most banal, popular and standardized aspects of architectural languages, often "sub-products" and derivations of the modernist utopia of functionality and progress, and on their relationship with day to day life and personal experiences. Through an approach that is also narrative and/or documentary and which combines different sources, Pernice and Snyder investigate the power structures and social dynamics hidden behind the utilization of these languages.

For Galleria Massimo Minini, the two artists will present an absolutely original project of collaboration, through a selection of intentionally-created works.

MANFRED PERNICE

Hildesheim, Germany;
1963. Lives and works in
Berlin

He has had several personal exhibitions in galleries like NEU (Berlin, 1995, 1998, 2002), Klemens Gasser (Cologne, 1996), Anton Kern (New York, 1998, 2001), Konrad Fisher (Düsseldorf, 1998) and in museum institutions including: Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (Paris, 1998), Institute of Visual Arts (Milwaukee, 1999), Portikus (Frankfurt, 2000), Hamburger Bahnhof (Berlin, 2000), Kunsthalle Zürich (Zurigo, 2000), Witte de With (Rotterdam, 2000-01).

He has also participated in group shows such as the Berlin Biennial (1998), *German Open* (Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, 1999), *Manifesta 3* (Ljubljana, 2000), and *Documenta 11* (Kassel, 2002).

A catalog of his work (*Die Dritte Dimension*) was recently published by Walther König.

Manfred Pernice's work is characterized by a continuous interrogation of the modes of sculpture, through a language that is rich in references to architectural styles (especially the most banal and standardized products linked to Rationalism and Functionalism), and to modern and contemporary urban landscapes. The German artist utilizes materials such as wood and chipboard, but also, more recently, plastic surfaces or elements of cheap furniture, to delineate forms that oscillate between sculpture and architectural installation, balanced between pure form and practical use. To these structures, which often make reference to standardized typologies linked to habitation, work, transportation or commerce, like dams, containers and cylinders, Pernice adds pictorial elements, texts and images taken from the most disparate sources (newspapers and books, for example), light boxes and, in a few cases, even monitors that transmit videos of a documentary nature. These heterogeneous elements make up a complex system of linguistic associations, narrative motifs, personal memories, poetic and literary suggestions, differently linked to the form enacted and the linguistic typologies referred to.

SEAN SNYDER

Virginia Beach, USA;
1972. Lives and works in
Berlin

Whether designing large structures of an almost architectural size, or joining together different sculptural units of smaller dimensions into articulated installations, Pernice works according to an attitude we might call "open," attentive to the relationships and dynamics among linguistic elements. The planning phase underlying the form, that is, seems to be merely a vague plot outline, a base structure onto which pictorial, narrative and sculptural elements are inserted, to the point of arriving at a result that is considered final, but which leaves visible the marks, and even the tracings, of this sort of indeterminacy, of precariousness, of unfinished-ness. Pernice works, then, on a moldable and spatial form of which he seems to undermine any pretext of independence, purity and monumentality. Rather, his work brings a sense of temporariness, and even of intimacy, which is born out of the relationship between personal experience and standardized, generally shared languages.

Pernice seems to "emotionalize" and "warm up" the serial repetitiveness of the formal typologies he cites (which are, in turn, the result of the banalization of languages of Modernism), and therefore to crack their pretense of communicating efficiency, functionality and impersonality.

Graduated from the Städelschule in Frankfurt. He has had personal exhibitions at the galleries NEU of Berlin (1998 and 2002), Leo Koenig Inc. of New York (2000), Chantal Crousel of Paris (2001). He has participated in important group shows such as the Berlin Biennial (1998), *Manifesta 2* (Luxembourg, 1998), *Cities on the Move* (Helsinki, 1999), Kwangju Biennial (2002), *Centre of Attraction* (CAC, Vilnius, 2002) and *Haunted by Detail* (De Appel, Amsterdam, 2002).

A lengthy piece on his work was recently published by the magazine *Afterall*.

Through the use of different elements such as photography, video, maquette and texts, Snyder's installations analyze aspects of urban space and architecture as signs of political and economic structures, and of media and cultural domination. Snyder's work arises from in-depth research of an almost sociological and anthropological nature, constructing a network of occurrences that teeter ambiguously between reality and fiction. Not resolving any of the contradictory elements brought to the field, and playing on the veracity or non-veracity of the information gathered, the artist leaves the spectator free to construct his own personal vision. In this sense, Snyder's work can be read, in the end, as a questioning of the credibility of information and of the ways in which it is constructed and transmitted. The American artist shows models of the functioning of capitalist society, observing the differences between theoretical assumptions and the real conditions in which capitalism itself is imposed on societies of diverse historical and cultural identities. His analysis is characterized by an extreme linguistic dryness and rigor of form, but is not without a note of acute irony and sarcasm.

In earlier projects, Snyder has studied subjects such as fast food restaurant chains and the relationship between their global message and the local cultures with which they are brought into contact; the impact of the television show "Dallas" and its protagonist Larry Hagman on the perception of capitalism in Romania in the Ceausescu period, in a network of relationships ambiguously balanced between political propaganda, cultural stereotypes and personal relations.

More recently, his investigation has turned to some aspects of the Asian continent: a few architectural typologies found in the Japanese landscape; urban planning in the North Korean capital Pyongyang and its relationship with the Bucharest of the communist dictator; the economic failure of a residential complex for employees of multinational corporations, constructed according to North American living and architectural standards, near Shanghai. In this latter project, Snyder used images from photographs he had taken, along with archive materials, to create a link between the city's colonial past and its present, showing the failure of the attempt to recreate the luxury of that period merely through the re-proposition of cultural infrastructures in different contexts.

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