

Gianfranco Baruchello

Few artists have gone through the 20th century with enough energy to carry some into the 21st. For **Gianfranco Baruchello**, who once drove Marcel Duchamp to Rome in a Ferrari going full speed, energy is soft and lasting, it irrigates his paintings, sculptures, films and performances. It is not a « shy » energy like that of the inventor of the ready-made, but an energy focused on the tiny and on detail.

If Baruchello seems so important to me, and by contrast so underrated, it is first of all because his work offers an immensely original spatial regime. And because his way of fragmenting the world, of dilating it ad infinitum, resonates in a particular way in our time : Baruchello's works represent islands of thoughts, circuits of forms, in short exactly what one can see in the « form-journeys » of the most interesting artists of our new generation.

If the Italian artist, after being so ahead of his time now finally seems to coincide with it, it is also because of the concrete and ecological utopia of Agricola Cornelia, the artistic project of a farm founded in 1973, which produced as many innovative forms as it did vegetables and milk.

Activist, poet, film director, painter, definitively unclassifiable, Baruchello (born in 1924) is of a generation of artists for whom art was first of all a way of life, and in his particular case an experimental meteor thrown onto the roads of existence. A huge fresco pulverized into micro details, his work is like an attack against everything massive, continental, authoritarian: his fragmented thinking process, composed of notes and comments to the book of modernity, offers a lasting transition between this modernity and the contemporary world.

Since our era finally seems ready for it, we can review the century with Gianfranco Baruchello.

Villa Arson invited me to be the curator for this retrospective, three years after the exhibition I organized at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Paris on Agricola Cornelia.

Nicolas Bourriaud, curator

Exhibition organized with the cooperation of the **Fondazione Baruchello**. Thanks to **Galleria Massimo de Carlo** (Milano) and **Collection Filippo and Veronica Rossi** (Paris).

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Gianfranco Baruchello was born on August 29, 1924 in Livorno (Italy), the son of a lawyer who was also the president of the Unione Industriale di Livorno (the Industrialist Syndicate of Livorno) and a professor at the University of Pisa.

After the second world war, Gianfranco Baruchello finished his law studies with a dissertation in economics. In 1947 he worked for the chemical firm Bombrini Parodi, specialized in explosive devices. In 1949, encouraged by his father, he became head of the biochemical research and development for Delfino. But in 1959 a weary Baruchello left the industrial world for good to dedicate himself entirely to art, and notably to painting.

In 1960 having gone to Paris he met the artist Roberto Matta and three years later the poet and critic Alain Jouffroy, who both encouraged him. In 1963, now in New York, he became close to Marcel Duchamp, who familiarized him with the avant-garde scene and even made a sort of disciple out of him. The following year he met John Cage. Pop art and the American Abstract Expressionist movement were revelations for Baruchello. He became interested in moving images and in making films.

PRACTICAL INFORMATIONS

From March 10 to May 27.2018
Open every day except Tuesday from
to 6 PM.

Closed on May 1st.
Free admission.

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In collaboration with Italian film director Alberto Grifi he composed *Verifica incerta*, a montage of images and sounds using essentially pieces of footage from fiction or news films from the 50s, which they found in projectionists' booths. The film was dedicated to Marcel Duchamp, around whom they built the story, a satirical monument to the memory of Hollywood movies.

Baruchello's fields of artistic experimentation are extensive and their impact on the postmodern movement is obvious.

First let us remember the creation in 1967 of a fictional firm called Artiflex, whose baseline was: "Artiflex sells everything". Acting as operator, Baruchello published an advertisement in various financial magazines calling upon the readers to write to ask for samples. For three years, Artiflex sent small packages to its subscribers, containing various motley objects (candles wrapped in newspaper, pages torn from a book on Mao Zedong, locks of hair, a can of tuna, etc.). In June 1968 at the Tartaruga gallery in Rome, an unusual performance was held: in a room called "Finanziaria Artiflex" (Artiflex Finances) was a table with a cash register behind which a "salesgirl" was sitting. She was offering cardboard boxes filled with 5 lira coins that were sold 10 lira each! The next day the space had become an "Artiflex waiting room" with seats and small tables. This performance was probably the first manifestation of something akin to relational aesthetics. Indeed, as an evolving work of art Artiflex can be interpreted according to the inter-human relations presented, produced or provoked. At any rate this is what Baruchello wished to do.

In 1973 Baruchello settled in the country at the center of Italy, and founded the "Cornelia Agricola S.P.A.", a real independent farm with all sorts of activities, from growing vegetables and fruit trees to raising sheep. The experiment lasted until 1983 and inspired Baruchello a series of paintings.

www.fondazionebaruchello.com



Gianfranco Baruchello, *Altre tracce con immagine stimolo*, 1959. Photo : Claudio Abate



Gianfranco Baruchello, *Mostra minuscola del '64. Eva font-ure*, 1963. Photo : Claudio Abate

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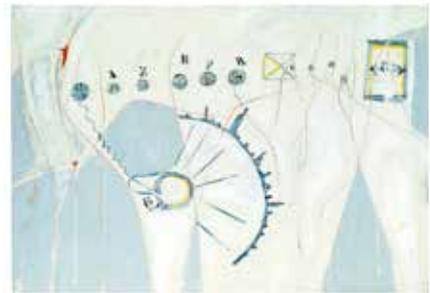
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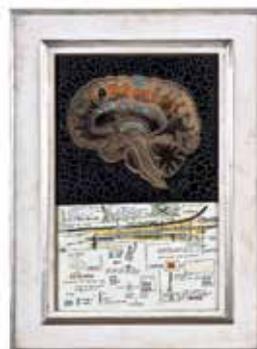
Gianfranco Baruchello, *L'imagination au pouvoir*, 1968. Photo : Claudio Abate



Gianfranco Baruchello, *Ignorance and old metaphysics must expect non survival*, 1962. Photo : Claudio Abate



Gianfranco Baruchello, *Déserteur de la Légion*, 1974. Photo : Ezio Gosti



Gianfranco Baruchello, *Il Kodardo Paraquòre*, 1966. Photo : Claudio Abate



Gianfranco Baruchello, *Costruire una torre al mattino con materiali trovati*, 1969. Photo : Claudio Abate

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