

Territories of Possibilism

by Enrico Pedrini

A new dimension that I term Possibilism has just made its way into contemporary art. Possibilism has facilitated a widening of art's linguistic horizon to include boundless space. Hugh Everett III's theory of the multiuniverse asserts that there must be several possible worlds, physically separated from one another, that submit to the same physical rules. The existence of parallel worlds favors a paradigmatic vision since it presumes the existence of other universes. The category of Possibilism becomes particularly meaningful, since physical constants assume differing forms in contiguous universes. Reality now includes the coexistence of many parallel dimensions where life only appears when conditions are suitable to its evolution. The art of Possibilism is an art in constant evolution. The artists of Possibilism are not bound by a common stylistic choice but make use of refer-



ences to, passages from, and contacts with a broader reality. In this way, artistic practice becomes more an unveiling of new dimensions and possibilities. Artists of Possibilism do not draw direct inspiration from reality but constantly manipulate its consciousness and perception. Today many artists suggest a notion of reality and nature as incomplete units, that are subject to continuous defini-

tions. Possibilism, however, defines and realizes the values of both linear and non-linear reality. Possibilist artists change art into the most effective and concrete possibilities of everyday experience. The basis of Possibilism is:

a.) Shared Knowledge:

Though our times do not value wide social consent, a conciliatory harmonious vision of society, or denial of the "other," sharing takes the form of ever-changing ideas. Reality becomes a current that opens our comprehension of people and things. Nature becomes a vast body shaken by intense conditions that turn into a wide range of phenomena.

b.) Expressive Possibilities:

Expressive possibilities of reality through art and vice versa, reflect possibilities that widen the borders of imagination and chart entire regions of experience on the symbolic horizon. Everything acquires shape and form, becoming less about facts and more about events. Unable to eliminate the object as a visualizing instrument, Possibilism challenges the passivity of the object.

c.) Spatial Relationships:

Art becomes a tool for exploring different entities in space by means of contradiction and modification. "Possible space" of Per Barclay poses a dialectic between the image of real space and the space of art.

d.) The Possible Relation between Daily Life and Art:

The rhythms of daily life offer art an opportunity for identification, or to become an alternative reality (as in the work of Martin Gostner, Jan Van Oost, Maria Serebriakova, and Susy Gómez). At times the observer loses his perspective and perceives contradictions between his role and that of the art work (as in the work of Costas Varotses, Alfredo Romano, and Reto Emch).

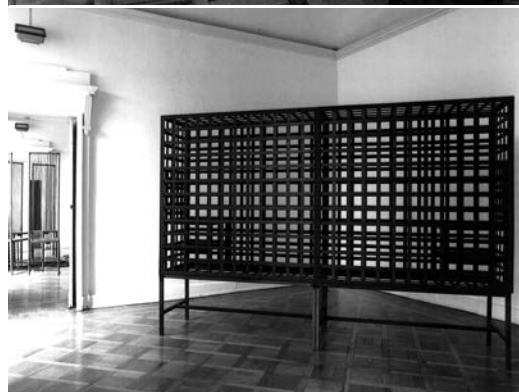
Possibilism also favors a reassessment of myth and the sacred. Myth becomes a point of interaction that gives rise to new cultural forms and ciphers (as in the work of Daniel Rothbart). Possibilism allows for the observer to become an active presence through inevitable changes of position and role.

e.) Knowledge and Sensation:

The rift between art and mechanisms of the art world become unclear (as in the work of "dissipative" artists like Ivano Sossella, Filippo Falaguasta, etc.) Possibilism investigates changing reality by deconstructing its cultural context and mythic values (as in the work of Marvin Minto).

Possibilism forces the need for instances of both continuity and discontinuity. The former develops perception around non-art issues while the discontinuous pattern favors creation, personal sensations, and desire. In a world of loosening stability these two patterns collide with each other, giving way to a dynamic principle of nature and art.

-Enrico Pedrini



From top to bottom, left to right: Jan Van Oost 1994, plaster+hair+clothing, life size; Susy Gómez 1996, mixed media & photograph on wood, cm 250x85x60; Per Barclay 1995, halogen light+aluminum+fabric; Daniel Rothbart, untitled installation, Planita, Rome, Italy ; Marvin Minto 1997, "Dots," grass installation; Maria Serebjakova 1990, wooden furniture under plex-glas, cm 72x120x45; Alfredo Romano 1998, "Nodi," iron, cm 210x300x60; Martin Gostner 1995, "Preservation of Traces," mixed media, cm 80x177x85. Photographs courtesy of Leonardi V-Idea, Genoa, Italy & Galleria Persano, Turin, Italy.