

#iorestoacasa #smartworking

#iamstayinghome

As we all know, the general lockdown has shut the doors of all museums and galleries. However, we are virtually open sharing insights and streamings featuring material from the gallery's archive. The content of every newsletter will remain online as part of our website on the page [#iamstayinghome](#).

This week we present a new focus on one of the artists represented by Galleria Fumagalli: **Peter Welz**. On this occasion the video project **Retranslation | final unfinished portrait (francis bacon) | figure inscribing figure | [take 01 - 03]**, made in collaboration with William Forsythe, will be streamed.

The link to watch the video is included at the end of this focus.

## PETER WELZ



Peter Welz in his studio, Berlin, 2019. Courtesy the artist

Peter Welz was born in Lauingen (DE) in 1972, he lives and works in Berlin. He studied at the National College of Art and Design in Dublin (1993-1995), at the Cooper Union in New York (1997) and at the Chelsea School of Art in London (1995-1998).

**Since the beginning of the 2000s, he has developed a personal kinetic perspective focused on the human figure in relation to the space and architecture. His work is characterised by multimedia installations where drawing, video and dance are the artistic means with which Peter Welz evokes**

**the fundamental issues of sculpture - figures, space, movement - in such a manner that each medium engenders another in reciprocal succession.**

In 2020, Peter Welz has been invited as artist in residence at Casa degli Artisti in Milan, where he has been exhibiting his last project *Portrait #4*.

Over the years, he has exhibited in solo exhibitions in important institutions worldwide, such as: Maaik Contemporary Museum, Chiang Mai (2019), Museum Pfalzgalerie, Kaiserslautern (2010), Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome (2009), Weserburg | Museum für Moderne Kunst, Bremen (2008), Musée du Louvre, Paris (2006), The Renaissance Society, Chicago and Museum for Modern Kunst, Goslar (2005), Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2004), Goethe Institute, St. Petersburg (2003).

## THE PRACTICE



Installation view of *Peter Welz*, Galleria Fumagalli, Bergamo, 2009. Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

Peter Welz's interest in the body movement and in architecture is well-shown in the works of the series ***Portrait***, an ongoing visual study based on four subjects: **Francis Bacon, Casa Malaparte, Michelangelo Antonioni and Monica Vitti, AA Bronson**.

The encounter with William Forsythe, a leading figure in contemporary dance, has been significant for the launch of the ***Portrait #1*** focused on the last and unfinished portrait left in his studio by Francis Bacon. ***Portrait #2*** is an architectural and choreographic study of Casa Malaparte, the modern villa of poet and writer Curzio Malaparte. With ***Portrait #3*** Welz pays homage to Monica Vitti and Michelangelo Antonioni, particularly focusing on the frames of *Red Desert (Deserto Rosso, 1964)*, Antonioni's first film in colour. The most recent project, ***Portrait #4***, is dedicated to Canadian artist and curator AA Bronson, cofounder of the artist collective General Idea.

Every single portrait consists of drawings, sketches, photographs, collages, videos that trace the movements and the outlines of the subject, often mounted on architecturally conceived surfaces, so as to create actual three-dimensional sculptures. The different media used in a fluid and interchangeable way cause a flux of images to best evoke the dynamism of movement in space.

## FIRST STUDIES AND PORTRAIT #1



Peter Welz, *The fall | shifted walls*, dimensions variable, reconstruction of the museum walls by Frank Gehry, Marta Herford, Herford, 2019. Courtesy the artist

The act of falling was one of the subjects in his first studies: for example, he filmed from all sides two professional dancers falling, and then projected the images on architectural devices. The sequences of falling - upward and downward - create a special choreography which show a new concept of space which is defined solely through the bodily presence of individuals.

**Thus, dance and video become part of the vocabulary of Welz's artistic language.**

In 2004 he started to collaborate with American dancer and choreographer **William Forsythe**. Their first joint work was entitled *airdrawing | whenever on on on nohow on* quoting a maxim from Samuel Beckett's text *Worstward Ho* (1983). Welz asked the choreographer to translate a passage of the text into precise movements: he filmed him from different perspectives also by attaching two cameras to the wrists of Forsythe.

**The striking intensity of the video projected on different surfaces engenders an architectural setting fully filled with the images of a moving body.**



Peter Welz, *Whenever on on on nohow on | airdrawing*, five channel video installation, 100 min. loop running simultaneously, amplifier, speakers, back projection screens, dimensions variable, MMK - Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, 2004. Ph. Klaus Peter Hoppe. Courtesy the artist

The collaboration with William Forsythe continued with **Portrait #1** and the installation *Retranslation | final unfinished portrait (francis bacon)* first presented at Musée du Louvre in Paris in 2006. In this case Forsythe transferred into his dance the dynamic structure inherent to the last portrait by Francis Bacon, found unfinished on an easel in the Irish painter's studio after his death in 1992.

The comprehensive installation consists of a tripartite video projection in which the movements of the dancer, who follows Bacon's traces, are recorded from two different frontal perspectives and one from above.



Peter Welz, *Retranslation | final unfinished portrait (francis bacon) | figure inscribing figure | [take 02]*, in *Corps étrangers*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 2006. Ph. © Musée du Louvre / Angèle Dequier. Courtesy the artist

**«Every translation refers to what has been translated and at the same time transcends it. Thus the energy of Bacon's painting seems to be preserved in the video walls, just as is the case with its transfer into movement in William Forsythe's wonderful choreographies, even if the work itself offers a fully independent resonance-space.»**

**Daniel Marzona**

## ***PORTRAIT #2***

The second chapter of the series *Portrait* is dedicated to **Casa Malaparte**, the remote residence of poet and writer Curzio Malaparte on the island of Capri and masterpiece of modern architecture designed by architect Adalberto Libera. Described by Malaparte as a «una casa come me: dura, triste, severa» («a house like me: harsh, sad and severe»), the building seems almost to emerge from the rocks, shored up by a trapezoidal staircase that stretches to the sea.

The project is an actual architectural portrait, inspired by the architecture itself and by the frames of the movie *Le Mépris/Contempt* shot by Jean-Luc Godard in 1963, of which is famous the scene that portrays Brigitte Bardot and Michel Piccoli sunbathing on the roof of the villa.





Installation views of Peter Welz, *Portraits | Installations*, Galleria Fumagalli & SpazioBorgogno Milano, 2014.  
Ph. Filippo Armellin. Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

Welz challenges the viewer to approach the spatial elements of Casa Malaparte and creates a narration between the classic modernist structure and the surrounding landscape capturing its appeal and isolation. The images projected on architectural devices provide a sense of calm and seclusion; the pure outlines of the walls and of the roof composed by large steps lead the viewer's eye to the vast and clear horizon.

In 2013 Peter Welz presented Casa Malaparte's portrait within the architecture designed by Mies van der Rohe in Krefeld bringing to life a very unique sculptural dialogue between the two architectural icons. Thus, the two buildings resonated one in the other through their lines and surfaces; the viewer finds themselves at the core of a complex and profound experience of modernism.



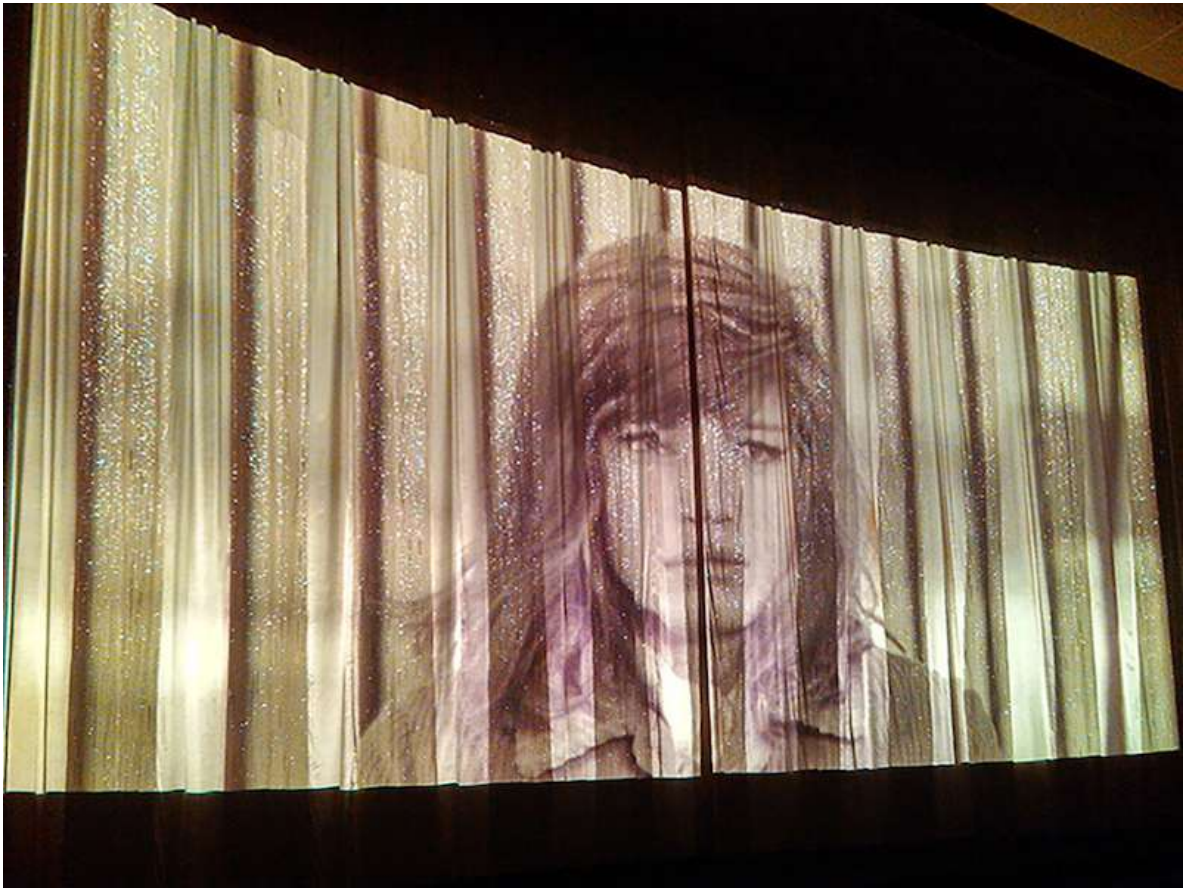
Peter Welz, *Portrait #2 [Casa Malaparte]*, model 1:1, Mies van der Rohe, Krefeld, 2013. Ph. Studio Dannenmann, Michael Dannenmann, BFF + DGPh. Courtesy the artist

### ***PORTRAIT #3***

Peter Welz continues his research conceiving ***Portrait #3*** dedicated to one of the major Italian film directors and best known for his “trilogy on modernity and its discontents”, Michelangelo Antonioni.

The artist used unpublished specimens and filming of the movie *Red Desert (Deserto Rosso, 1964)*, Antonioni's first film in colour, in which actress Monica Vitti played the main character Giuliana. The video sequences focused on a very crucial moment of the film when the protagonist was asked to cry, the most vulnerable, private and powerless moment, and the very point where the fictional reality overlaps with the actual reality (during the filming Michelangelo Antonioni corrected the scene by walking into the frame twice and finally neglected this delicate moment in the final version).

**As in the previous projects, the resulting work is a hybrid between architectural sculpture and video installation.** In 2016 he conceived a special device for the Kino International in Berlin, a premiere cinema of the former GDR. By projecting the frames on the cinema curtain, he created a fragmented image as if there were several vertical panels to compose it.



Peter Welz, *Portrait #3 [out-take | Monica Vitti | onto cinema curtain]*, projection onto white and glitter cinema curtain, Kino International, Berlin, 2016. Ph. Sabrina Tenório Luna. Courtesy the artist



Peter Welz, *Portrait #3 [screen-test | Monica Vitti | study]*, 2017. Photographic prints, tape on paper, 52x67x3 cm. Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

## **PORTRAIT #4**

**Portrait #4** is about Canadian artist and curator AA Bronson, cofounder of the artist collective General Idea. The project focus on this figure standing alone in an undefined space. Two cameras revolve around him: when one of them captures him from the front, the other is at his back, like planets around the sun. He stands calmly, undeterred by the ceaseless, circular movements of the recording devices. This perpetual cycle seems to evoke the passage of time, a recurring theme in Bronson's work.

At the beginning of 2020, Peter Welz presented a news set-up for his residency at Casa degli Artisti in Milan. The screens on which the video shooting sequences are projected present circular cut-outs that recall the rotating movement of the cameras around Bronson, and create a sculptural and three-dimensional image through the screens.





Peter Welz, *Portrait #4 [AA Bronson | single projection | triple screen]*, projection screens, 240x170 cm each, full HD projection, sound, Casa degli Artisti, Milan, 2020. Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

The project is complemented by studies on paper and photographs. Some of them depict a drawn line on Bronson's left forearm, a kind of non-tattoo with no other meanings but to define a detail of his body. The fragment is manipulated by Bronson's right hand or distorted by the support on which it is projected.

**The studies on paper address a prismatic splitting of the form, exploring figure, body, and identity in analytical fashion.**



Peter Welz, *Study for a portrait (AA Bronson | tattoo)*, 2019. Archival print on cotton paper Nova smooth, 75x102x3,5 cm. Courtesy Galleria Fumagalli

On the occasion of this special insight dedicated to Peter Welz, Galleria Fumagalli shares the video of the project *Retranslation* | *final unfinished portrait (francis bacon)* | *figure inscribing figure* | [take 01 - 03], made in collaboration with William Forsythe and first presented at Musée du Louvre in 2006.



The video is on view at this [LINK](#)  
typing the password: **Retranslation**

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To learn more on the artist's work, visit [Galleria Fumagalli website](#) and [peterwelz.com](#)

Texts partially drawn from the catalog *Peter Welz* with texts by Carsten Ahrens and Daniel Marzona, published by Kehrer Verlag Heidelberg (2009) on the occasion of the artist's exhibition at Weserburg | Museum für Moderne Kunst, Bremen, 2008; from the text by Giulia Bortoluzzi included in the catalog of the exhibition *Contemporary Chaos* held at Vestfossen Kunslaboratorium Foundation, 2019; and from the artist's website.

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