

#iorestoacasa #smartworking

#iamstayinghome

Let's continue our special program of virtual appointments sharing the video of the **conversation between Dennis Oppenheim and Alberto Fiz, held in 2010 in Galleria Fumagalli's former venue in Bergamo.**

**The gallery's full program scheduled for this time of lockdown is available at the page [#iamstayinghome](#) of our website.**



«It's the first time that such a number of marionettes has been grouped into an installation». With these words Dennis Oppenheim introduced the work *Theme for a Major Hit* to curator Alberto Fiz, set up on the upper floor of Galleria Fumagalli in 2010 on the occasion of the solo exhibition *Material Interchange. Works 1968/1974*.

Conceived in 1974, the work consisted of 25 marionettes with the artist's face. Dressed in a white shirt and coloured felt suits, and rigged to machinery, they ceaselessly danced to the lyrics "It ain't what you make, it's what makes you do it". With this work, Oppenheim questioned the meaning of the art process, what motives make the artists do what they do: it can be money or success, in any case these objectives tend to influence the artists. «The work is about manipulation. And that's the big question for artists: are they being manipulated? The fact that they want to be famous, they manipulate themselves for their objective. They are already under control, under outside control.»

The conversation continued on the gallery's lower floor focusing on the other works on view, starting from *Aging*, also made in 1974, the very year in which the artist experimented with the human figure, depicted here in an act of dematerialisation, a metaphor for death. Another work from the Body Art research by

Dennis Oppenheim was *Gingerbread Man* (1970-1971) that presented a video in which the artist was voraciously eating ginger biscuits containing organic elements, and alongside a series of microscopes showed samples of his faeces. In this way the cycle of body functions related to digestion was examined. Therefore, in the works *Reading Position for Second Degree Burn* (1970) and *Forming Sounds* (1971) the body was treated as a material subjected to a marked external conditioning.

The exhibition also brought together some Land Art pieces from the late 1960s such as the sculptural work *Condensed 220 Yard Dash*, where a long run was depicted by the black and white photographs hung to the wall, while on the ground it was materialised and metaphorically condensed in the footprints impressed on the staked tiles. *Annual Rings* (1968) and *Ground Mutations* (1969) are large photographic works deriving from site-specific interventions, which respectively record patterns similar to the tree's growth - with political and temporal meaning - which cut the boundary between the United States and Canada, and the artist's footprints left on the snow as a universal mark of the human presence on the ground.

Regarding his experiences of Land Art, Oppenheim said that it is a matter of making some changes to the environment. However, «it is also something very graphic, very much about geometry, because you don't want to forget that you are an artist.»

**The video of the conversation  
is on view exclusively at this [LINK](#)  
typing the password: **Marionettes****



To learn more about the artist's work, visit [Galleria Fumagalli's website](#).

The full program of the gallery's virtual appointments is available at the page [#iamstayinghome](#).

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