

# IRENE DIONISIO

*Il pensiero in meno*

curated by Iliaria Bernardi

03.06-09.06.21

*Galleria delle Immagini - Palazzo San Celso - Polo del Novecento, Turin*

What space, role and power does thought have in the western world today? Can the thought operate inside a society that on one hand subtly continues to apply censorship and restrictions and on the other transforms thought itself into a good and, if so, how?

Director and artist Irene Dionisio starts from these questions to realize the works of this exhibition: they are a series of works on this topic, among which some works made between 2016 and 2021, and some of which were created especially for the occasion.

In the entrance room, the poster *Small Homeland* (2016), is inspired by cultural identity in the Alta Valle Cervo in north-western Italy. It reflects on political factionalism and parochialism of that geographical area, as well as it highlights how language and therefore thought can draw maps and outline physical spaces but also trace rigid boundaries and limits.

*A pendant*, the film *Mondo Nuovo* (2020) develops a similar reflection, on our gaze, on our way of looking at the world. Conceived in March 2020, when it felt like we were being denied the image of the world, it wonders where our new starting point will be when the world can become the object of our gaze once more.

In the central room, the artist presents a new version of the performance *Che l'assenza sia dichiarata* produced by the Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea in 2019. The performance interprets the absence of Guy Debord from the First World Congress of Free Artists in Alba, Piedmont, in 1956 as an accusatory act and poetic declaration: life is more important than art, cinema is dead and we are just cultural ghosts with no real meaning. By leaving the autocue with Debord's text inside his imaginary empty studio, that is reconstructed ideally with furniture, archival folders, objects, the accusatory thought expressed by the text is transformed into a harmless image, stripped of its author's presence.

In the adjacent room, *Il mio unico crimine è vedere chiaro nella notte* (2018) instead deals with the topics of censorship in Italian cinema, imagining the fragments cut out of films by maestros of the

seventh art. So, the cuts become places to repopulate with today's audiences and to reflect on the meaning and power of the image in the past.

The exhibition is rounded off by a new work, *Highly Relevant Words*, (2021), that testifies to the "sacrilegious" act of thinking: consisting of burning a book. The works consist of two books, a candle in a case, the ashes of a burnt book, the polaroids realized during the act, and the telegram sent by the artist to the curator announcing that act.

While in 1966 Michelangelo Pistoletto made *Minus Objects* to react to a conception of the market that empowered a specific cultural domain, with *Il pensiero in meno* (Minus Thought) Irene Dionisio takes position against the current parameter – that empties thought – in order to free it from all censorship, external impositions and contemporary alienation.

*"In my opinion, the artist has the freedom of a revolutionary, an intellectual, we have 'a positive function', that is, to create a parallel and alternative way, an aesthetic dimension free from structural constraints' "*, states Irene the artist as her own statement.

**Irene Dionisio (Turin, 1986).** *Irene Dionisio's work meanders between cinema and visual art, including video installations, documentaries and fiction films.*

*Her works have been displayed in solo and group exhibitions at prestigious venues in Italy and abroad such as IIC, New York; PAC, Milan; PAV and Castello di Rivoli, Turin; OCAT, Shanghai; Palazzo Grassi, Venice; Museu Berardo, Lisbon; MamBo, Bologna; and Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva.*

*Her films have taken part in numerous international festivals (amongst which the Venice Biennale, the Turin Film Festival, Visions du Réel and Taiwan Film Festival) and received numerous awards (amongst which the Premio Solinas; Prix Scam, France; the jury prize at Cinéma-Vérité in Iran and the Nastro d'Argento).*

*Irene Dionisio also won a grant for the Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg Nipkow Programm (2020), an ArtOmy grant, New York (2020), the Premio Bertolucci (2020) and American Dream Fellowship for Artists (2021).*

*Piccola Patria* (2016)  
Poster, 132,5 x 200,5 cm  
Galleria Moitre, Turin

*Che l'assenza sia dichiarata* (2019-2021)  
Live performance, 11', and site-specific installation, furniture, autocue and archival material

*Il mio unico crimine è vedere chiaro nella notte* (2018)  
Video, 4k, super 8, 35mm, 19'  
Produced by Centre d'Art Contemporain - Geneve with the support by Torino Piemonte Film Commission

*Mondo Nuovo* (2020)  
Video, super 8, 35mm, 3, 25'  
Produced by Ginko Film e Home Movies (Bologna), winner of RaccontoPlurale – Fondazione CRT

*Parole di cocente attualità*, 2021  
Two books, framed telegram, telegramma incorniciato, polaroids, ashes of a burnt book  
Variable dimensions