



Thomas Bayrle, *SARS - Formation*, 2005
10 reti di cartone collegate/10 connected cardboard networks
560 x 420 x 380 cm
Basilea/Basel 2005/Biennale di Gwangju/Gwangju Biennale 2006
Con la cortese autorizzazione di/
Courtesy of Barbara Weiss, Berlin/Francesca Pia, Bern

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MACHINE?

My favourite machine is the arc welder. It melts metal through a short circuit between the electrode and the piece to weld. I like the sound that it makes.

Conveyor belts, assembly lines, bottling plants, tablet distributors and printing machines represent super-organisms composed of hundreds of sub-machines. Like little rivers, assembly lines float in from all sides towards the main torrent. By the time they reach the main belt they have already passed an odyssey of processes... On the main belt all parts are united into big conglomerates: cars, PlayStations, computers, almost every complex mass-produced thing. I often watched this process in different production areas. Robots fill millions of bottles, mix, fix and wrap tons of tablets, produce ten newspapers at a time... beginning with crude paper and ending in UPS and DHL delivery vans... I dreamed myself away while watching such meticulous and precisely programmed details constantly repeating their movements to techno-eternity – like givers, takers, cutters, perforators, counters, distributors.... I once found out that if you listen carefully these engines start to sing! Like old women used to sing their rosaries in the middle of a dark monastery from the Middle Ages, repeating the same prayers over and over. I thought I was crazy, but I placed my car directly onto the gearbox of a racing weaving machine, and then I understood... I could here the ladies whimper rather clear phrases. Listening even more attentively I understood the words they sang: prayers for bread, prayers for blessing, prayers for rain, prayers for good harvests to come... (You don't believe me? Put your ears on the machines. It sounds a bit like Devo or early Kraftwerk even!) But who locked those ladies into this awful gearing? Was it witchcraft that guided them into this efficient horror dream? Anyway, material has changed a lot in the last 500 years. And now it serves us! At least till it strikes back with some boring energy crises or something...

WHAT DO YOU WISH WERE TECHNOLOGICALLY POSSIBLE THAT ISN'T CURRENTLY?

I would love to have a portable radio that could receive the voices of people within 100 metres and simultaneously translate all the languages of the world, including dialects.

I wish these conveyor belts would zoom down from such cold scales to the very scale of the human body, to more organic shapes. This would bare the chance of more compatibility...

HOW HAS TECHNOLOGY CHANGED YOUR WORLD?

It's made it more complex.

It hasn't changed my world too much. As I hate dishwashers, lawn mowers, vacuum cleaners for leaves and the whole sector of "helpful" household machines, rather few of such "personal helpers" remain. The computer, the car... not even the TV, which bores me too... I've never believed that a machine really does something 100 per cent quicker.

DO WE USE MACHINES OR DO THEY USE US?

We use machines but often we become so dependent on them that we completely forget why we are using them.

I do not pay too much attention to the fetishism of machines. As a former Marxist I still believe they do nothing for us that is not intended by people standing behind them!

HOW FAST DO WE GO?

I go slow. The fact is that we can stop and we need to accelerate or decelerate depending on the situation we're facing. Speed completely alters the perception of things.

I believe in different times. Personally, I think we are driven by the abilities that our bodies and soles provide and allow. Globally, super mono-conveyor belts like stock markets, business, news and wars make our environment go faster.

Micol Assäel nasce nel 1979 a Roma, dove vive e lavora. Le sue opere ruotano attorno al tema dell'assenza in contrapposizione all'esistenza, sviluppati prevalentemente con disegni e installazioni. Nei primi, le forme bianche, interagendo con la luce, definiscono dimensioni percettive diverse; le seconde, costituite da elementi diversi, si inseriscono nell'ambiente creando un rapporto intenso tra pubblico e spazio. Thomas Bayrle nasce nel 1937 a Berlino; attualmente vive e lavora a Francoforte. È sempre stato ispirato e affascinato dalle 'masse': comunicazione di massa, mass media e produzione di massa. Fa loro assumere forme diverse: libri, poster, lavori di grafica, film...

Micol Assäel was born in 1979 in Rome, where she currently lives and works. She deals with the theme of absence contrasted against existence, mainly through drawings and installations. In the former, the blank forms define different perceptive dimensions by interacting with light; the latter, made with various elements, are inserted into the ambient to create an intense relation between people and space. Thomas Bayrle, born in 1937 in Berlin, currently lives and works in Frankfurt am Main. He has always been inspired and fascinated by "masses" (such as mass communication, mass media and mass production), which he transforms into various forms: books, posters, graphic works, film, etc.

Tarzan&Jane Technology Micol Assäel and Thomas Bayrle

Tarzan&Jane is an encounter between two artists.

Tarzan&Jane is a project specially made for Domus and produced by Wrong Gallery.

Directed by Maurizio Cattelan, Massimiliano Gioni and Ali Subotnick, the Wrong Gallery is a non-profit space for the survival of play and experimentation.

Micol Assäel answers in orange
Thomas Bayrle answers in blue