

Satoshi Hirose

TRA-MITE

dario salani

To achieve the aesthetic aspects sought after, Satoshi Hirose, utilizes various mediums such as installation, environmental interventions, performance, sculpture, photography, drawing, and projects more encompassing. In his multi form and multi lingual mode of communication, he encompasses a large quantity of concepts and different "truths" and assimilates them in a coherent manner. The movement, the changes, the instability, the undefined, the lightness, the arbitrary, and the ephemeral, are all called upon as stimulus in his iconological research. In his work, the conceptual side is primarily prevalent. It is immediate and easily approachable. It's not a hostile or hermetic concept, but more so an eloquent and automatic one.

Hirose uses a *trasfert* in regards to the pureness and essentiality of every day life in an artistic manner and this is without a doubt the characteristic most coherent of all his works. Simple objects, often invisible in the passage of every day, are used as subject material for a systematic reflection of the way things are, of the significance of symbols, taking into account the analysis of the difference that exists between the meaning of words and of those spoken.



Arlecchino, 1998. Cloth, Fishing line. 260x280x2cm.

Satoshi Hirose is a Japanese artist, born in Tokyo, but who has been living in Italy for the past eight years. Frequently traveling the world, often to set up the exhibitions to which he has been invited, he is an attentive observer of the reality in which he finds himself, of the uses of its inhabitants and of their ways. Hirose observes and lives the shifting between the cultures and applies this knowledge as a point of departure. For example, in the installation piece *Arlecchino* (1998) the harlequin is taken on as a mascot. It is a typical figure in Italian tradition and literature. In a room a colorful patchwork of cloth triangles is suspended above the heads of the audience. This suspension evokes, almost imperceptibly, the controversial figure of the *Comedia Dell'Arte*. In the Bergamese mask Satoshi meets again the sharply ironic aspect of the personification of Carlo Goldoni's *Servitore di due padroni* (a trickster) and a malicious citizen who is in actuality honest, sensible, and endowed with extreme intelligence. Therefore the *Arlechen* frenetic and in perpetual movement also represents the inseparable values that holds united the people. The artist finds self irony and identifies himself with this satirical and sensitive character of our culture and places the spectator between himself and his idea in another anthropology realm.

In *Un gusto passeggero* (1994) the patchwork theme can be found again. However, the aims and goals are different. It is an unpublished piece is shown for the first time. Ten kilograms of chocolate in multi-colored wrappers are contained in a hollow monolithic base. The bon bons/ "Cri Cri" are a typical Turinese candy with a chocolate center coated in a shell of multicolored sprinkles. In this case we assist in a symbiosis between the white structure that has been built to the artists specifications, and the "ready made" of the manufactured chocolates; a traditional product of the subalpine city. The artist asks the spectator what the relationship is and what the boundaries are between the "Value" of the minimalistic structure, with its large physical presence, and the Cri Cri (a mechanical product of the sweets industry). In the aesthetic perception, Hirose introduces the taste factor as an important olfactory sensation that we also find in many of his other works.



Un Gusto Passeggero, 1994. Wood, Stainless, candy, Paint. 200x200x210cm.

In *Lemon Project 03*, presented for the first time in Tokyo last year, the pavement of an entire room in the gallery was completely covered by a "Nature Carpet" of 700 kilos of real lemons. The walls of the room are painted of a yellow very similar to the natural color of the lemons. Upon entering into the environment the viewer is immediately captured not only by the yellowness, but also an intense perfume of lemons. Passing a steel and Plexiglas constructed pedestal the spectator arrives to the other side of the room where he/she meets the artist who then offers them a lemonade on the spot.



Lemon Project 03, 1997. Flesh lemon, Glass, stainless, paint, lemon oil. Dimentions variable.



Spice Room, 1995. Curry powder, rice, vinyl. Dimensions variable.

In this environmental installation we find numerous and complex concepts that recur. Like, the harlequin and Turinese chocolates, the "Lemon" element becomes the emblem of the Italian peninsula. (Goethe himself describes Italy as the country where lemons flourish.) The fragrance of the lemons is in reality a perceptive disorientation controlled by the artist with the help of a spray of essential lemon. The game of sensory destabilization in this case is based on the relationship between natural and artificial. The participant believes to smell a real scent, but in reality an artificial spray was previously sprayed in the air. However, the artificialness disappears again in the moment the spectator uncovers that the spray bottle contains a natural scent taken from the lemon. The mechanisms of the exchanging of the parts and of the duality is initiated.

In 1994, Satoshi Hirose, introduces the olfactory sense as an important aspect in his work. In the following year he creates an important installation in Thailand, *Spice Room*, in which he covers the entire pavement of a gazebo with tons of curry, a common spice of that part of the world.

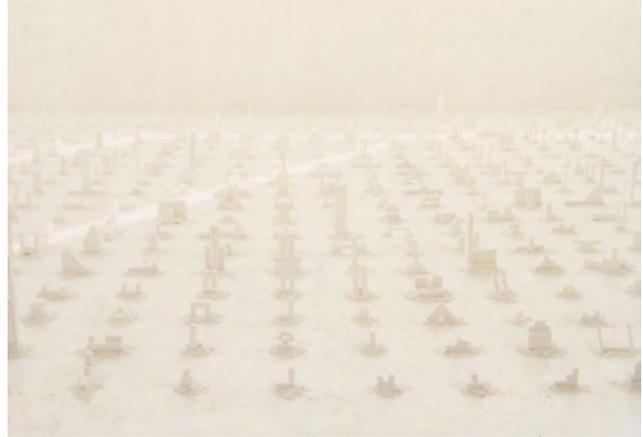
The relationship between truth and lies, natural and artificial, real and imaginary, is well established in *Bocca d'Oro* (1993) a mortar is constructed in white marble the inside is covered in an amalgam of real gold plating and imitation gold. Naturally it's impossible to differentiate between the two. This is a perfect example of Hirose's artistic language. A common object, banal, pertaining to our everyday life is taken as a visual model. The pestle is a work instrument used in chemistry, medicine, and in the kitchen. It is a unique form that encompasses preconceived ideas and an imaginary situation that is very different. It speaks of the changeability of symbols of one of a kind images. It is an entity in continuous movement that alters back and forth from a closed form to a transferable concept of existence.



Bocca d'oro, 1993. Marble, gold leaf. 20x20x21cm

In *Architettura senza architetti*, an insinuating piece realized in the time span of five years (1989 -1994). The artist scatters in a room an uncountable number of small white wooden plugs, of various

geometrical forms. The impression is that of a series of small scale model buildings situated in suburbs of a hypothetical futuristic metropolis. This fictitious theme is fundamental and should also be noted that in regards to the concept of the indefinable and undetermined, uncertain of the uncertainty of knowing where it came from and the secret and of innermost significance inscribed in the material reality.



Architect without Architecture, 1989-94. Wood, Paint, Marble powder. Dimensions variable

The arbitrariness of beliefs inscribed in the genetic code of humans, aside from its anthropological roots, is prominently addressed in the 1994 sculpture *occidental Island*. On a piece of marble there are three connected circles of various measurements. They are composed of an intense green vegetable musk. Satoshi's stimulus came while pondering on geographical nations: the concept of the instability - when stopping to think about it - of the reversibility of the political representation of the world. In the world map of the west, Europe is the center, while the Asian version places Asia itself in the middle of the Americas and Europe.



Occidental Island, 1993. Marble moss, ground. 100x700x6cm.

In the sky series, *Milan, Rome, Turin, Stuttgart, Bangkok, Andalusia, Siberia*, the artist photographed the open space above with its clouds and its chromatic blending, of some of the countries most recently visited. In this photographic series, it is the instant that a button is pushed that the fleeting present becomes immobilized. The sky is by definition, the entity most variable and mobile that exists in nature. It represents the ephemeral, in all its glory. In merit of such consideration, the Japanese artist has written, "All my work lives under a sign/aspect of "unstable equilibrium", and a potential movement, like a mentally visualized process, although without ever arriving at a concrete description or a clear vision of its forces.

Analyzing Hirose's work individually, we find a vast quantity of conceptual relationships upon which the artist bases his work. It is a concentric labyrinth, an infinite walk then a series of "funhouse mirrors" that works through conceptions, obvious truths and mental engagement. The conceptions come up against various sorts of problems, propose inquiries, doubts, and never give way to

absolute truths. All are found in a geographical crossroads. A meditative journey from the real to metaphysical; spiritual but also rationally present at the same time.



Bangkok 1995, 1996. ilfochrome print on aluminum. 75x50cm.

Hirose's installations have the power to nullify meaning, stressing the significance and the signification: the objects receive energy from their real functions and exceed that limit; becoming new (born), fresh entities. Standing in the midst of Hirose's work, the viewer feels his/her five senses completely excited and exhilarated. Furthermore, the viewer can come to understand Jung's philosophy "symbols are vectors of energy." However, we speak of a psychological energy that is discreet, light and faint, but never strong nor aggressive. It is in fact the sensation of lightness that acts as a link to tie together the work of the artist. It is a volatile element utilized to comprehend the work as a whole. It is interesting to quote Satoshi, "The lightness is intended like transparency, like a subtractive factor. It is a poetic side to art. Furthermore, when you least expect it, a dash of humor, irony (...) The lightness encompasses its opposite, and vital movement is realized. Like an exchange between heaviness and lightness, physical and spiritual. The lightness is a rare and precious gift that can easily fall into an abyss. But at times, its' prejudice is also its defect. The two extremes touch and one never knows where one finishes and the other begins. "

In these last few lines, lies the key to understanding Hirose's works.

Dario Salani is a critic based in Turin.

(Translated from Italian by Jeanine)

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