Waiting for the Accident to Happen

The question of the archive is not a question of the past. It is not the question of a concept dealing with the past that might already be at our disposal. An archivable concept of the archive. It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise, and of a responsibility for tomorrow. The archive, if we want to know what that will have meant, we will only know in times to come; not tomorrow, but in times to come. Later on, or perhaps never.


Jacques Derrida analyses the validity of the archive in a series of lectures held in London between 1994-1995. Denying the existence of sources actually definable as primary sources, Derrida reminds us that history is based on stories told by men. An archive should therefore be constantly rearranged and expanded: it has to select and exclude at the same time: it shouldn’t have a start or an end, but it is eternally subjected to interpretation.

Waiting for the Accident to Happen is a group show including works by nine artists, sourced from the Careof Video Archive and beyond, which dwell on the fragmentary nature of the archive. Starting from the validity of an archive, allegedly created as a rational, objective and thorough ensemble of primary sources, yet subjective due to the selection made by individuals, the exhibited works question and play with the shifting borders between documentation, reality and fiction.

Francis Alÿs (If you are a typical spectator what you are really doing is waiting for the accident to happen, 1997) films an insignificant event, springing into a sudden accident; Brice Dellsperger presents remakes of cult movies whose special effects, technically prosaic, plays with identity and clichés (Body Double 2, 1995). Alice Cattaneo (1 minute 42 seconds, 2007), Clorinde Durand (Naufrage, 2008) and Ivan Argote (Sans Titre (Paris), 2010) shoot unforeseen situations and incidents, pointing out the ambiguous nature of the artistic artefact. Rä di Martino (August 2008, 2009) and Chiara Fumai (The Girl with the Blanket, 2008) play on historical documentation. Interviewing water diviners represents, for Meris Angioletti (Rabdomante, 2006), cause for reflection on probability: that thin line between science, belief and reality; while the tales of Adrian Paci’s daughter are based on a fictitious memory (Albanian Stories, 1997).

Waiting for the Accident to Happen forms part of an exchange between Careof (Milan) and Screen Space. In 2014, Screen Space co-directors Simone Hine and Kyle Weise presented the curated exhibition Moving Pictures/Expanding Space at Careof, and participated in the FDV residency program. Waiting for the Accident to Happen is a return exhibition presented at Screen Space in October-November 2015 and curated by Antonella Croci. Both exhibitions explore interpretations and legacies of the ‘archive’, taking inspiration from Careof Video Archive hosted at DOCVA: Documentation Centre for Visual Arts, which is co-organised by Careof and Via Farini.

Antonella Croci
Francisco Alÿs, if you are a Typical Spectator, What you are Really Doing is Waiting for the Accident to Happen. Zócalo, Mexico City, 1996 video, 10’

Meris Angioletti, S’Rabbolame, 2006 video, 14’13”

Ivan Argote, Sans titre (Paris), 2010, video, 4’59”

Alice Cattaneo, 1 minute 42 seconds, 2007 video, 1’42’’

Brice Dellsperger, Body Double 2 - After Body Double. (Brian de Palma), 1995 film 16mm transferred to DVD, colour, sound, 30’

Clorinde Durand, Naufrage, 2008 video, 7’

Chiara Fumai, The girl with the blanket, 2008 video, 4’04”

Adrian Paci, Albanian Stories, 1997 video, 7’

Ilaria Martino, August 2008, 2009 video, 5’

Rä di Martino, August 2008, 2009 video, 5’

Ivan Argote, Sans titre (Paris), 2011 video, 4’58”