



NEVERLAND GAZA

Alessandro Bulgini
NEVERLAND GAZA
2025

We are the dead.
Winston Smith in 1984

A work will never grant anyone,
under any circumstances,
full possession of his personal
details and its author will only be
the first witness chosen to carry out
the delicate mission of guarding
an unfathomable secret.
Giulio Paolini

The art world as we imagined
it has imploded...
Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger

Text by
Christian Caliandro

1. Alessandro and I had argued.
We didn't speak to each other for years.
It happened during Covid – this fracture that marked a watershed moment, a before and after, a crucial moment whose impact on us we have perhaps not yet fully assessed, with its ability to change, albeit for a limited period, the very structure of daily life, habits, and in the long term, human relationships, our collective relationship with science and even our conception of time – but Covid had nothing to do with it, of course. It was misunderstandings, misinterpretations, the classic 'differences of opinion' that drove us apart.

And then, slowly, we started talking and seeing each other again.
All things considered, life is really too short to waste time on things like that.

2.

The question around which reflections and discussions revolve is always the same, ultimately, albeit formulated and expressed in various ways: how can art influence reality today? Can it really do it? What is the point of art?

The risk of art that is, so to speak, 'committed' or 'political' (assuming that such a thing makes sense, or even exists for that matter...) is always just around the corner: the caption, the rhetoric. But a work of art is not a *watchword*, and I think we can all agree on that: only trivial or terrible art is a slogan.

3.

On the other hand, worthless art does not simply depend on the poor times in which it emerges, but actively contributes - in turn - to generating these mediocre, flawed, and even dangerous times. How does this process work? If, for years and decades, an entire civilization becomes accustomed to a one-dimensional, simplified and simplistic culture, heavily oriented towards consensus and profit; if this culture convinces its producers and consumers, step by step, that a work of art must have a single, unambiguous meaning, that this significance must be explained clearly and unequivocally, and that it is even indistinguishable from the 'message' (i.e. that the work says what the artist or the viewer wants it to say, and only that), then turning back - or moving forward - becomes extremely difficult, and that civilization finds itself in severe distress.

Among the many functions of the work is that of training us to consider any subject from multiple points of view: this means completely abandoning the logic of opposition and actually managing to think even like someone with whom we strongly disagree. This does not mean relativizing every opinion, but - rather - knowing how to identify with others without renouncing what we think and believe, and freeing ourselves from the constraints and conditioning that prevent us from truly seeing an issue from different perspectives and angles. Knowledge is a prism, not a tunnel - and such prism cannot be bought, but built gradually. Art itself is this irreplaceable prism.



Ø. *At the center is PROXIMITY. Bringing together: concepts, situations, aspects. The reference to tables laid out among the rubble in Gaza for the dinner that breaks the Ramadan fast... Closeness: bringing together not only people, but also what is distant, virtually impossible to see or hear. Approach it, recognize it and recognize yourself.*

This work aims to be a space for resonance. The rugs donated by friends and acquaintances, the chairs with their legs cut off, the parable that comes from the past and the history of this place, the tea on the camp stove, the lights... Everything is dense – and meaningless, literally. Everything is so recognizable, so not very exotic, so non-exotic. So ours.

Breaking down barriers, stereotypes, and the many ways of distancing oneself, of

4.

So what should we do when confusion and the reversal of meaning reign everywhere? In the meantime, for example, read and reread George Orwell's 1984 (1949), in which we find all the clues that really matter today: 'Who controls the past controls the future. 'Who controls the present controls the past.' ¹ ; and: 'After all, how do we know that two plus two equals four? Or that the force of gravity really exists? Or that the past is unchangeable? What happens if the past and the outside world only exist in your mind, and your mind is being controlled? ²

5.

The work does not describe, comment or communicate. It does not say. Above all, it does not talk about a theme, it does not 'deal with a theme' - if anything, it lives it, goes through it, experiences it, and at that point that something is no longer a theme and never has been, it is reality: it becomes its own time, and builds the next one.

"The only way out is through"

(Robert Frost). The most important task that art can perform, which by definition does not admit tasks, is to eliminate filter after filter, layer after layer, fiction after fiction, and allow us to access, for a moment, a core of truth that is always and forever ambiguous, ambivalent, mysterious.

6.

Art, the fictional force par excellence, differs from all other forms of fiction because it does not seek to abolish the past and cause-and-effect relationships, but - rather - protects that core of truth, and does so through fiction itself: 'Ever since the first bard hastily penned the first epic poem about a certain battle in the past, illusion has become part of our lives. (...) The human beings have always done everything possible to preserve the past, to keep it alive, and there is nothing strange about that. Without the past, we have no continuity, we only have the moment. And the moment - the present - deprived of the past has very little meaning, perhaps none at all. . ³

¹ G. Orwell, **1984**, Mondadori, Milano 2013, p.

² **Ivi**, p. 85.

³ P. K. Dick, **Illusione di potere**, Mondadori, Milano 2024, p. 41.

Alessandro Bulgini

Taranto, 1962

After his degree in theater scenography at the Academy of Fine Arts of Carrara, Alessandro Bulgini lived in various Italian towns such as Rome, Milan, Livorno, Venice, Genoa, and Taranto, to which he owes the absolute independence and individuality of his work. Difficult to be framed into any artistic current, he utilizes a wide spectrum of means to narrate and act with and on laterality, diversity, physical and cultural suburbs. Several personal and collective shows, both in Italy and abroad with the cycles of works: "Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe" starting from 1993, "Hairetikos" from 2001 and - in 2008 - the latter adds to the Opera Viva cycle. With Bulgini's Facebook membership in November 2008, Opera Viva lands also on the social network thus becoming a social work, and - still in existence today - it relies on the active contribution of its participants, where the artist develops various innovative ways of artistic use of both the network and the territory. Hence, the inauguration of the B.A.R.L.U.I.G.I. project (Opera Viva) from a bar in the suburbs, it states the simple rules to turn existent spaces (such as bars, butcheries, private houses or full villages) into creative welcoming spaces without any filters, free of charge and no profit. Such spaces are connected to one another through individual Facebook pages. At the end of the project, starting from Barriera di Milano in Turin - the neighborhood where he lives - the artist focuses its activities on the local areas. Since 2013, he has been collaborating with the Flashback association and, since 2022, he has been the Artistic Director of the Flashback Habitat, Ecosistema per le Culture Contemporanee cultural and exhibition pole.



17/04/2025 - ∞