

THE WING OF THE SENSES *By Francesca Rebecchi*



The same dramaturgical set-up as the previous works, attesting the “multi-mediality” of this new genre which Carlo Ansaloni has defined as “ Art - Science and Theatre”, is seen once again in this additional work conceived by Ezio Cuoghi and his collaborators, which is centred on the perception of the sensible world, with its scientific, genetic and neurological implications. The topics covered deal with the “Noosphaera”, our more or less immediate future, the lapse of time where the most exciting scientific fantasies collide with our deepest existential anxiety.

“The Wing of the Senses” directs our attention towards those boundary areas and areas of exchange, those spaces which can no longer be defined in words but belong to the fluidity of experience.

The subtitle of this third intermedial event is “Stati di Mutazione Progressiva” (States of Progressive Mutation), precisely because mutation is the ‘module’ which encloses the meaning which can no longer be defined. The states of mutation are constant throughout the entire performance. Cuoghi reminds us that the arguments regarding the perceptive mutation of contemporary man most probably advance in a context which is strangely shared with our interest in genetics and the manipulative capacity of genetic engineering deriving from the

use of new technologies (at the time of the staging of “The Flexible Elix”) almost as if it follows the assumption that a mutation of a human perceptive system anticipates a more systematic mutation of the whole organism, both singular and collective. We entertain the supposition (more daring and freer than the aesthetic approach) that the



transformation of communication systems thanks to new communicative technology might well be one of the possible and fitting foundations on which a real alteration of the species Homo Sapiens Sapiens could be based.

The event is divided into 19 frames in succession, each one of which examines specific aspects of perception, preceded by a prologue in which Giorgio Celli comes on stage to give a brief introduction of the theme dealt with. The first and last frames (Alba Antropica and Alba Altrove) ideally encompass the course in a symbolic frame, since both of them deal visually with the same natural event, that is to say the rising of the sun, even though they deal with it from a perceptive resolution which is almost diametrically opposed.

The second, third, fourth and fifth frames deal with the band of natural perception of our organs of sense (with particular reference to sight and hearing), with the help of projections which are at the limit of the sublime or images which are moulded on the peculiarity of retinal permanence, or acoustics which scan the subsonic and ultrasonic of human perception.

The sixth, seventh and eighth frames tackle problems relating to the reliability and ambiguity of sensorial information, while the ninth frame (Danza degli Automati con Palingenesi Robotica) is a frame touching on the subject of ‘sensorially

interactive' technologies, developed by the DIST of Genoa University during research under the guidance of professor Antonio Camurri : A ballet dancer (the choreographer and dancer Virgilio Sieni) performs a funny dance with a robot, which moves 'autonomously' 'reading' the dynamics of the reality surrounding him, thanks to a series of appropriate sensors. Frame ten introduces the kinds of technology which are a help to the senses, that is to say which broaden the natural 'band'.

Frames eleven to fourteen deal with more strictly scientific questions and frame



thirteen in particular dwells on the 'systems of reference' presenting a dance which, with the help of projection techniques which send opportunely manipulated images of this same dance, allow for a perception which challenges the linear flow of the arrow of time.

Frame fifteen shows the soprano, Barbara Lui, striking up a song which has been electronically manipulated to the point that the sense of the words is completely unintelligible.

Frames sixteen and seventeen represent the reflection possible between man and present-day technology. Maybe at this stage it is worth pointing out that the characteristics of the seventeenth frame (Simmetrie Virtuali) give a taste of the implications between dance and computer technology which are the focal point of the latest work conceived by Cuoghi: Simultaneous Action (2003). As a matter of fact, in this work we see two dancers in the survey area of a special technological system able to dynamically reproduce graphic syntheses of bodies, which merge every now and then, drawing the cardinal points of 'fantastic bio-technological chimera' on the screen.



Finally, the last but one frame shows a chaotic retrieval of images taken from all the previous frames, whilst a dance is built up using the free-standing exercises of a gymnast (Laura Cutina, Gold Medalist at the Los Angeles Olympics).

All of which is continually focussed on the desire to promote a 'horizontal culture' in which scientific, media and artistic cultures are linked up.