



Students group show - Fine Art Academy of Rome.

Sala Colleoni 9-21 April 2018. Opening 9-4-18, h. 17.00 – 20.00.

Curated by Chiara Passa, synopsis by Giulia Caruso.

“MEMEnto – Internet semper” is an exhibition organised by Chiara Passa, visual artist and lecturer at Fine Arts Academy in Rome that presents the work of young student artists exploring the meme in the Internet age through GIF sculptures and video installations. What follows is part of the introduction to this exhibition by The term *meme* was first used by biologist Richard Dawkins in his 1976 essay “The Selfish Gene” based on the existing paradigm between genetic and cultural human evolution. The gene described by Dawkins multiplies information, guaranteeing the evolution of all species. It could be said, therefore, that the *meme* is a particle of cultural information which spreads, more or less rapidly, into our present existence - like viral information.

Unlike Dawkins’ *meme*, which changes instinctively, artistic *memes* generated online are knowingly and intentionally changed and shared to make them go viral. It is necessary to exercise caution, however: *memes* are not always created to be exclusively funny; *meme-art* is increasingly a phenomenon of culture and information that is produced with the aim to engage. Mostly used by a younger generation and internet users, *memes* become social tools to convey shared ideas and facilitate an understanding of important political and social questions.

To underestimate their semantic power, by thinking of *memes* simply an Internet phenomenon, would be superficial. *Memes* currently keep online culture alive and bring it into the world of Contemporary Art, which is what the “MEMEnto – Internet semper” also sets out to achieve. This exhibition by students of the Fine Arts Academy in Rome is a eulogy of online culture and its ‘legitimate’ practices, such as *plagiarism*, *détournement*, *copyleft* and *remix*. These practices can generate continuous changes in art works, creating antagonistic or antithetic meanings vis-à-vis the original images which are no longer, or only vaguely, recognisable.

So far we have seen artistic *memes* represented purely as *GIFs*. In “MEMEnto – Internet semper”, however, the concept of *meme* is expanded and used to create digital sculptures, 3D prints and interactive videos accessible online, thus altering the approach to linear concepts such as time and space.

What is the result? There are over thirty *GIFs* displayed in this exhibition and also six provoking *meme* sculptures speculating on the current space-time condition, which is increasingly diluted and experienced between the real and the virtual. There are also twenty-seven *video-memes* sensitively moving between exhilarating storytelling and entertainment, generating unexpected sensory shifts in perception. Through unpredictable stories, constituted by a succession of clicks in no particular order, the structures of the *video-meme* stories never proceed with linearity. Viceversa, the chronological order of these narrated stories can also suddenly be inverted, producing videos that consist of two beginnings and three endings or endless narrative *loops*, for example.

Chiara Passa

“MEMEnto - Internet semper” Sala Colleoni, Accademia di Belle Arti, via Ripetta 222 Rome.

Exhibition opening times: Monday-Saturday 10:00 - 18:00. From 9 to 21 April 2018. Visited the exhibition online from April at <http://mementointernetsemperaba.altervista.org/> and via social media: Twitter: @MementoSemper Instagram @mementointernetsemper Facebook: MEMEnto Internet Semper

Online catalogue from April <http://www.chiarapassa.it/memento-catalogo.pdf>

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