

Luca Buvoli

Infused with metaphors, the work of Luca Buvoli is at once a flight of fancy and an immersion into reality. Informed by open-ended experimentation, his practice hinges on a non-hierarchical interconnectedness of media, including drawing, video, animated film, painting, sculpture and comic-book format.

Since the 1990s the Italian artist has created a unique body of work exploring issues of time, space and representation in whimsical and multilayered ways. As exemplified in his pivotal *Not-a-Superhero* and *Flying* projects, Buvoli's art is concerned with current notions of heroism, vulnerability, authority and fantasy. In its unresolved tension between text and image, it reveals a wealth of scientific, literary, philosophical, and political correspondences, belying a deep engagement with conceptual and existential inquiries conveyed through graceful levity and irony. Over the years Buvoli has consistently concentrated on the theme of flight and its manifold allegories. Imbued with an inherent desire to communicate, his work focuses on this Promethean impulse, often taking the teaching process of how to fly as its subject matter and as a metaphor for the transformative power of art. Focusing simultaneously on the physicality of the body and the volatile quality of the intellect, his art investigates the impossible attempt to reach one's ideal perfection, fusing the personal and the universal. (The artist's father used to be an aviator, and thus Buvoli's fascination with flying goes back to childhood.) For the Biennale, the artist has created a large-scale installation at the Arsénale, a dynamic synthesis of video, animation, sculpture, drawing and painting. Titled *Un Bellissimo Dopodomani*, it takes inspiration from the words spoken by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, the founder of Italian Futurism, to his daughter Vittoria urging her to remember that 'There will be a very beautiful day after tomorrow', a motto poignantly coined at a time when Marinetti was nearing the end of his life and the Fascist regime he had supported was about to collapse. Documentary footage and passages of pure animation merge personal and historical narratives with pictorial abstracted forms through layered montages, while, suspended from the ceiling or fallen on the floor, light sculptural vectors traverse the space like line-forces spelling out Marinetti's words. While reflecting on the legacy of Futurism and its controversial relationship with Fascism, Buvoli deconstructs the dream of an impossible utopia. Upon entering the Corderie, we step into a wonderfully fragmented universe of sounds, objects and colours expanding in all directions. In dialogue with the architectural space, it suggests a circularity of space and time – a leap into a simultaneous past-present-future

tense. Language and image are intertwined in a process of constant making and unmaking that opposes inquisitiveness to ideology. (In the fragmented animated sequences of his video *Aphasia*, Buvoli records individuals who have aphasia reading the Futurist Manifesto, their moving struggle with language counterpointing the Futurist notion of aggressive speed and its authoritative fascination with power.) In Buvoli's dystopic world, where the resilient allure of a better future co-exists with the ruins of fallen dreams of potency, there is still room for swoops toward the horizon, speedy leaps into the unknown, and the taste of clouds.

—FP

'Ci sarà un bellissimo dopodomani [there will be a very beautiful day after tomorrow] – Marinetti to his daughter at the end of his life.

Anachroheroism: a human figure – with open arms on his side – flies forward while facing backward [is he the 'angel of history?'].

This silhouette/axometry had become a trope in the Propaganda Posters, and has generated the Vectors and their contrails/streaks: crystallization of motion and speed (A Monument to Movement) – all segments pointing to one and many vanishing points at the same time – a backward flight-line starting from Siegel and Shuster's Superman to a Futurism revisited from a post-utopian perspective. Contrails/streaks – memories of aerobatics I used to watch with my father (a pilot born in 1920), but also of modernist rhythms and myths – now hopelessly entangled. [...]

Velocity Zero: a- with the assistance of speech-language pathologists, I videotape adults who stutter or with conditions of aphasia, as they read the Manifesto of Futurism; b- I transform the slowed speech into fragmented animated sequences by tracing thousands of lines around the readers' movements, paralleling their struggle in capturing the text. [...]

On the search of the perfect oxymoron (an attempt to question the authoritarian and threatening side of our fascination with the future, velocity and power). A Futurism without optimism: homage to both my cultural heritage and to individual and collective creativity and energy, yet framed within a different perception of time – a time of war, of all-future; a time of de-actualization of history, when the promise of freedom echoes recurring manipulations.

—Luca Buvoli, adapted from *Notes on Propaganda Posters, Expanded Drawings, Vectors and Protectors*, in 'Art Documents: NOW - Luca Buvoli', Intermuseum Conservation Association, Cleveland, OH, 2, 3, Fall-Winter 2006.

Luca Buvoli. Born in Brescia, Italy, in 1965. Lives and works in New York, USA.
www.lucabuvoli.com

Solo exhibitions:
2007 *A Very Beautiful Day After Tomorrow* (Un Bellissimo Dopodomani), ICA, Philadelphia, USA.

2001 *Inside and Outside Time: Finally Revealed!*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA.
2000 *Flying: Practical Training for Beginners*, M.T. List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, USA.

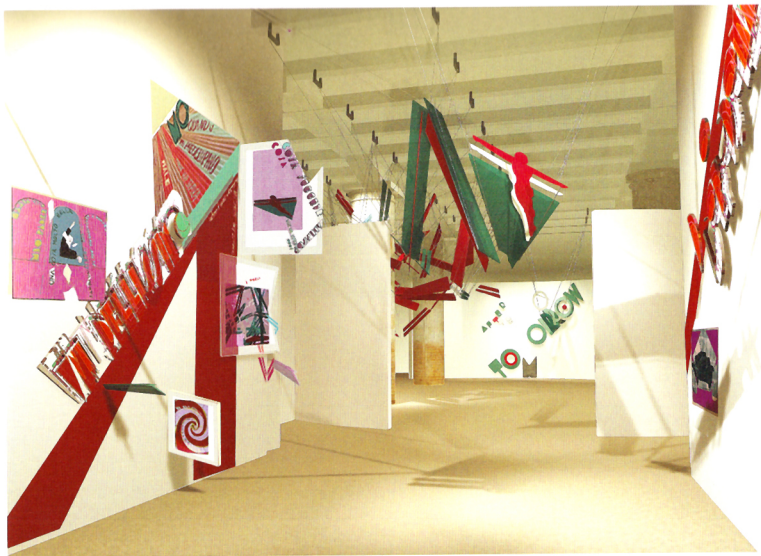
Group exhibitions
2004 *Premieres*, Museum of Modern Art,

Titus Theater, New York, USA.
1999 *Mythopoeia: Projects by Matthew Barney, Luca Buvoli, and Matthew Rische*, Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, Cleveland, USA.
1997 *2nd Johannesburg Biennale*, Johannesburg, South Africa.

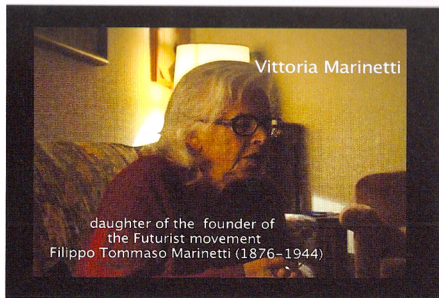
Publications
R. Rubinstein, *Watching the Arts*, in 'Art in America', November 2004, p. 152.
L. Buvoli, *Leaping Diabolics in a Single Bound*, in 'The New York Times', 2 November 2003, p. 24.
B. Schwabsky, *Drawing in Time: Reflections on Animation by Artists*, in 'Art on Paper', March-April 2000, pp. 36-41.



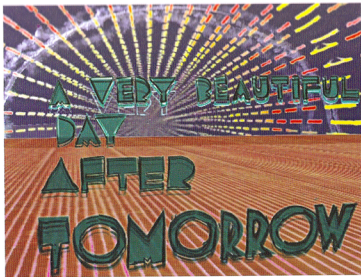
PHOTO: G. SCHWABSKY
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



Luca Buvoli, *Computer generated study of Assanule room, with Vector Tricolor [Anachroheroism], Wall of Propaganda Posters [Anachroheroism], and Un Bellissimo Dopodomani-Mosaic [Anachroheroism]*, 2007, detail. View of front entrance. Reinforced polyester and polyurethane resin, metal, glass and marble mosaic, gouache on monoprints on paper, and other materials. Courtesy the Artist. © Luca Buvoli



Luca Buvoli, *A Very Beautiful Day After Tomorrow* (*Un Bellissimo Dopodomani*), 2007, detail: Vittoria Marinetti. Still from single-channel video animation, DVD, 10', color, sound. Courtesy the Artist.
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Luca Buvoli, Composite still from
A Very Beautiful Day After Tomorrow
(*Un Bellissimo Dopodomani*), 2007;
detail: title. Still from single-channel
video animation, DVD, 10', color, sound.
Courtesy the Artist. © Luca Buvoli