

Sprecher verwandeln das Manifest in einen gestammelten Lobgesang der Dysfunktion und Unsicherheit – die Verlangsamung beraubt die Sätze ihrer Feurigkeit und Kohärenz –, sie tritt an die Stelle der ursprünglich beabsichtigten musikalischen ›Poesie von Mut, Verwegenheit und Rebellion‹.

Buvoli hat für das Projekt in Essen eine neue, skulpturale Präsentationsform geschaffen. Das Ein-Kanal-Video *Velocity Zero [Aphasia]*, ein Fünfminutenstück, in dem englische Sprecher Auszüge aus dem Manifest vortragen, wird auf einem einzelnen Flachbildschirm innerhalb einer Konstruktion in der Mitte eines Ausstellungsraums gezeigt. (Die Fassung ist übrigens eine alternative Version des *Velocità Zero [Aphasia]* in italienischer Sprache.) Die Installation besteht aus einer Art dekonstruierten Hütte mit aneinanderlehenden Wänden, die mit Malerei und Textfragmenten bestückt sind; eine Formensprache, wie sie der Künstler bei seiner Arbeit für die Biennale bereits entwickelt hat. Wortfragmente sind dabei als skulpturale Elemente in einer verzerrten perspektivischen Form angefügt. Ergänzt wird die Installation von einem Ensemble von ›Propaganda‹-Plakaten, die Buvoli schon oft in seine Installationen integriert hat. Sie sind ebenso Elemente, die mit der charakteristischen Subtilität des Künstlers die gesellschaftspolitische Formbarkeit von Sprache und Bild hervorheben und die Kluft, die so oft die Theorie von der Praxis trennt, dramatisch zum Ausdruck bringen.

Übersetzung aus dem Englischen von Petra Gaines

*We intend to sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and fearlessness.* — F. T. Marinetti, *Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism*, 1909\*

Like so many other utopian schemes of the modern age, the Futurist notion of a society governed by a "habit of energy and fearlessness" was a Janus-faced dream, one whose dystopian dark-side already was lurking, even in the early years of the century, along the horizon of history. A fiery gospel of progress and industry, sung by the young and impatient to a society they saw as ruled by the old and complacent, the manifesto—written in Italian by Marinetti, initially published in French on February 20, 1909, in the Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro*, and first translated into English three years later—struck a nerve in a Europe groaning under the weight of its history. Yet no one could know just how—and how catastrophically—the Futurist creed of cleansing violence would be instrumentalized in the deadly socio-political convulsions of the coming decades, or how prescient the aggressive momentum of its revolutionary rhetoric would turn out to be.

Luca Buvoli's multi-media practice has long used a nuanced combination of drawing, animation, sculpture, and film to explore the ambivalences—the enormous promise and equally outsized failures—of such modern aspirations to liberating dyna-

mism, to power, to acts of will designed to redefine aspects of the essential character of the human being. His ongoing project *Not-a-Superhero* (since 1992), for instance, reimagines the archetypal comic book protagonist as a retiring, vulnerable figure struggling with the loss of his powers; similarly, his *Flying—Practical Training for Intermediates* (2002–2005) used the act of flight—that most existentially aspirational of activities, and one also especially vivid for Buvoli, the son of a Italian air force pilot who was held in prison camp for a time during World War II—to interrogate the limits of pedagogy and intentionality in the pursuit of a kind of physical and spiritual transcendence.

*Velocity Zero*, Buvoli's contribution to *Fusion/Confusion* at the Museum Folkwang Essen, constitutes an elaboration of one central element of *A Very Beautiful Day After Tomorrow—Un Bellissimo Dopodomani*, the artist's ambitious, sprawling work shown in its first configuration at the ICA Philadelphia and then further expanded and reconceived for last summer's 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale. Orchestrated for a carefully-considered sequence of physical spaces in the Arsenale, the full realization of *A Very Beautiful Day* was in a sense an apotheosis of Buvoli's career-long engagement with the struggle between the optimism of the attempt and the disillusionment of its malfunction: a multivalent instantiation of his exploration of that indeterminate zone that separates

intention from execution, appearance from reality, means from ends.

*Velocity Zero* uses the eleven pronouncements that form the centerpiece of Marinetti's call to arms as its libretto (an especially provocative choice in the artist's native Italy, where many aspects of the movement's philosophy became incorporated into the infamous Fascist dogma of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s). But Buvoli turns it on its head by having it announced by a chorus of sorts comprising men and women who suffer from stuttering and/or aphasia—the latter being a clinical cognitive impairment, typically caused by brain injuries related to strokes, that interferes with the production and comprehension of speech and the ability to read and write. Their pauses, slippages, and misreadings shatter the text and the resulting fragmenting of the soundtrack—in which Marinetti's exhortations are subjected to alterations of pace, syntax, and sense—functions as a wry *dé-tournement* of the text as a whole, producing a buckling and warping of meaning that has echoes in the concrete poetry for which the Futurists were celebrated.

If the dysfunctional recitations performed by Buvoli's speakers short-circuit the socio-political functions of the manifesto, *Velocity Zero* also homes in on the issues around the physicality of language and the elasticity of time that have always been at the very core of his practice. His subjects' faces, shot from below in an ironic mirroring of the aggrandizing low-vantage shots typically used to capture Mussolini's rants from the Palazzo Venezia in Rome, are further obscured behind a skein of rotoscoped animation. With its flickering backgrounds and "boiling" lines, Buvoli's animation strains the opticality of the work in a way that parallels and enhances its auditory deformations. The speakers' struggles convert the manifesto a stammered paean to dysfunction and tentativeness—slowing it down to a pace that seems to drain all the fire, not to the mention coherence, out the phrases—rather than the musical "poetry of courage, audacity, and revolt" it was designed to be.

Buvoli has created a new, fully elaborated presentational setting for the project in Essen. The single-channel video *Velocity Zero [Aphasia]*, a five-minute piece in which English-speakers perform excerpts from the manifesto, will be shown on a single flat screen set within a structure in the middle of a gallery. (The work is an alternate version of the thirteen-minute Italian-language *Velocità Zero [Aphasia]*, which features Italian aphasics reciting all eleven of the original injunctions.) Designed as a kind of disjointed lean-to with gaps in its walls and decorated, like artist's recent Biennale work, with words rendered as sculptural elements in exaggerated perspectival form, the viewing construction will be surrounded by a number of the "propaganda" posters that Buvoli has often included in his installations—yet another element that draws out, with the artist's characteristic subtlety, the socio-political malleability of language and image, and dramatizes the chasm that so often divides theory and practice.