

## BOHEMIA LIES BY THE SEA

### *To practise discontinuity, to imagine otherwise*

In an increasingly uncertain present, which looks to the past in order to find orientation, it becomes necessary to question the lens through which what has been is observed. The future, rather than opening itself as a horizon of possibilities, has progressively imposed itself as a dystopian figure, generating a feeling of betrayal that reactivates a nostalgic gaze towards the past

Within the hegemony of nostalgia that runs through politics and lifestyles, the political and cultural configurations of the present are marked by a prevalence of postures that look to an idealised and romanticised past as a horizon to which to return, or from which to draw inspiration. It is a past invoked in order to withdraw from the uncertainty of a time perceived as complex, unstable, and violent. Like a diffuse atmosphere, this nostalgia does not merely describe the present: it orients its desires, expectations, and the limits of the thinkable.

In moments charged with antagonisms and resentments, anxiety becomes an instrument of domination: it renders obedient and blackmailable; it places in quarantine, depriving Tomorrow of any hope. In a present overcrowded with the past, which struggles to produce genuinely new forms and often calls for a return backwards, nostalgia can, however, change function. When stripped of every restorative impulse and desire for reinstatement, beyond any romanticism, it assumes a new operativity: it becomes a methodology capable of bending time, interrupting the present, and restoring — or granting for the first time — agency to worlds, modes, histories, materials, and bodies otherwise marginalised.

Thus, hoping becomes a movement that, like Dick Fosbury, looks at the obstacle before it, runs towards it, challenges it, but, for an instant, turns its back on it and, in doing so, overcomes it. This moving otherwise declares, in the interruption, the urgency of changing the point of view from which to approach the contemporary world. Such a torsion becomes, in fact, a tool for introducing discontinuity into a linear time perceived as untameable, countering a condition of reflexive impotence that has by now become systemic and endemic.

Hope ceases to be a future projection and asserts itself as a situated act: a practice that restores complexity and depth to the present and offers a strategy for “staying with the trouble.” Far from any promise of salvation or resolution, hope manifests itself as a posture that accepts opacity, contradiction, and incompleteness as conditions to work with. It does not point to a way out, but to a way of dwelling in the threshold, transforming uncertainty from a paralysing limit into a field of possibilities.

As in Fosbury’s jump, hope does not circumvent the obstacle: it embraces it, making it the pivot around which to articulate a movement that reveals itself as emancipatory. It changes posture, activates a counter-intuitive gesture that does not erase the threshold, but crosses it in a way that had not previously been considered. In this shift, it subverts the established order, betrays the known for the unknown, and generates a rupture in the status quo.

The fifth edition of the Biennale Internazionale Donna observes the fracture through which the rays of nostalgia insinuate themselves into the present, in order to interpose a different filter, capable of

catalysing them into a generative practice. What emerges is a critical methodology that calls into question the linear relationship between past, present, and future, usually accepted as a given.

Not understood as a refuge nor as an identitarian gaze drawing on a past perceived as monolithic, nostalgia here becomes the place in which to seek the material with which to construct, in the stormy sea of the present, an outpost from which to orient oneself. An obstacle that forces a reinvention of the way of jumping, opening up an exploration capable of rewriting the cartography of Today and reactivating what imagination had suspended.

Far from any idea of return or reinstatement, **BOHEMIA LIES BY THE SEA** intends to investigate forms of memory and memorialisation that operate through fragments and new wholes, partial returns and reactivations, between earthly dimensions and lucid dreams. A research that interrogates what of the past continues to exert pressure on the present, orienting its possible trajectories.

Through artistic practices that work with missing archives, broken genealogies, surviving gestures, and possibilities left unfinished, the Biennale becomes a space in which memory turns into action: a way of recovering what has been denied or interrupted, of recomposing relations, and of restoring complexity to simplified histories. A source from which to draw in order to irrigate post-nostalgic scenarios, in which what has been does not ask to be repeated, but navigated and transformed in its very becoming.

From this perspective, the present opens up as a field of tensions to be inhabited, in which it is still possible to imagine and pursue other worlds; a territory from which to articulate “after-the-future” politics, founded not on the promise of progress, but on the care of the present. On the rebuilding of trust, on vulnerability, on the capacity to dwell in uncertainty; on the recomposition of sensibility, on slowness, on poetry, on the body, and on new forms of affective and linguistic autonomy.

The challenge is not to accelerate towards a better Tomorrow, but to inhabit the fragile infinity of the present, without the illusions of modernity. A gesture that refuses the logic of anticipation and linear progress; an exercise in attention and care that requires renouncing salvific promises, recognising the political value of dwelling, of slowing down, of staying; of learning to orient oneself without stable maps and of lingering in the time that is. It is from here, from a posture that is not resolute but vigilant, from this unstable and shared condition, that it becomes possible once again to believe that Bohemia lies by the sea.

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