

Press release
Alessandro Lo Monaco “Homeland Security Advisory Signal”

Opening, 18:30 Sept. 21, 2005 at Symphonia Arte Contemporanea, Corso Matteotti 5,
Milan.

In partnership with Galleria PACK, Milan

Alessandro Lo Monaco belongs to the new generation of artists grown up during the digital era. A generation for whom it is normal to use computers, software, cameras and Internet as means of expression. In spite of the young age, Lo Monaco has already taken part to various exhibits and shows of international level. In 2003 he had an important solo show at Desart Gallery of Brescia. In 2004, part of Genoa 2004 European Capital of Culture, he held a solo show on the Palmaria island, curated by Gianluca Marziani . For the occasion the Swiss-Italian artist has introduced a series of paintings created entirely through digital programs, representing aseptic and extraniated bodies, created from the computer's void without ever taking any inspiration from reality. As a matter of fact one of the characteristics of Lo Monaco is that he employs digital instruments to forge inexistent realities or viceversa to create what only existed in the virtual world. Exactly this latter feature is at the heart of the work presented in world preview at Spazio Symphonia Arte Contemporea for the artist's first solo exhibit in Milan. The only work presented is called "Homeland Security Advisory Signal". It is a towering sculpture, a sort of monolith of the information-age, tridimensionally reproducing the "Homeland Security Advisory System", a color-coded alert signal representing the current risk of terrorist attacks on the American soil. (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/homeland/index.html>).

The topic is sadly contemporary. However Lo Monaco's latest work wants to be something more than a provocation that rides the latest wave of events. Reconstructing in the shape of a sculpture the Homeland Security Advisory System", the artist places a series of questions on some ideological and ethical issues of this beginning of the millenium. As during the times of the aerial bombings there were loud sirens that informed the population of the imminent danger, today new instruments and new references for our times of invisible war are necessary. Instruments exactly like the "Homeland Security Advisory System, instruments able to offer to the people an explicit and direct representation of the current dangers and the threats existent in our environment. The point is that the light-signal of terrorism is only apparently explicit. In realty it is an obscure and conflicting object. The population is not informed on the criteria and the stardards used in order to decide if the signal has to remain blue, orange or to become red and suggest the maximum alert level. Beyond that of information, the signal is an instrument of persuasion, a means of rhetoric that must make us reflect on the grammar of communication, all aspects on which Lo Monaco artistically investigates.

The language used by the Homeland Security Advisory Signal is Manichaeian, it invites to emotional reactions rather than to reasoning and conclusively it uses the same codes of fear and anger used by terrorism.

The Homeland Security Advisory Signal is therefore a perfect example of a postmodern monolith. Mysterious, indecipherable, invested from above of a powerful religious content, able to assemble the masses and to control their behavior.

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