

## ***Conceptual Rigoletta*** **by Adriano Altamira**

**Opening: 8 February at 18:00**

**Exhibition period: 9 February - 10 March 2018**

“There are twelve panels. Each panel is a story.

None of these stories originates from a real or fictitious event, but simply from the juxtaposition of several images that I’ve seen or, as they say, have passed through my mind and ignited a spark after friction occurred between them.”

In the words of Adriano Altamira, this is the subject of his latest installation at the Marconi Foundation, which takes its title from a brief, dazzling piece of nonsense, *Conceptual Rigoletta*, written by Altamira four years ago.

Despite its ironic appearance, *Conceptual Rigoletta* is in every way a true meditation on the status of the image and continues the conceptual research Altamira began in the 1970s, which culminated in his most important work: *Area of Coincidence*.

*Conceptual Rigoletta* is composed of about sixty drawings, divided into sequences of five and presented on twelve panels. Together they form the narrative fabric of a novel in images, following the tradition begun by Max Ernst in the 1930s with *La femme 100 têtes*, *Rêve d’une petite fille qui voulut entrer au Carmel* and *Une semaine de bonté*.

In fact, the installation on show in the gallery, with the original drawings, symmetrically echoes the issue of a book published by Corraini: a true novel in images.

The installation and the book thus maintain a dialogue at a distance, which at the same time unites and divides them. A brief written appendix in the book reveals the salient elements of this narrative adventure. The term *Rigoletta* has nothing to do with the Verdi opera, except for the fact that the short poem from which the exhibition takes its title is a sort of paraphrase of “La donna è mobile”, the famous aria from *Rigoletto*.

The poem says in fact: “Art remains immobile / what a rare event / it alters in the middle / of its thought”. In their turn, the sixty drawings that make up the work are also a sort of paraphrase of the photographic sequences the artist has been creating thus far, but now, as drawings, they are transferred into a new atmosphere: dreamy, sometimes full of emotion and sometimes cruel.

## Biographical notes

Adriano Altamira (Milan, 1947) came to the fore in the early 1970s as one of the most distinctive figures on the Italian artistic and cultural scene, establishing himself simultaneously as an artist, historian and contemporary art critic.

His first solo exhibitions in Italy and abroad date back to 1972 and '73 respectively, as do his first publications in the journals *NAC*, *Flash Art*, *Le Arti*, *Tema Celeste* and *FMR*. In the 1980s and early '90s Altamira also contributed to the art pages of the newspaper *Il Giornale Nuovo*, and later to *Corriere della Sera*.

Altamira developed his art on the fertile Milanese scene, where he got to know not only Conceptual artists such as Vincenzo Agnetti, but also sculptors like Luciano Fabro and others close to him, among them Trotta, Tonello and Nagasawa. Meeting Franco Vaccari, who became a friend and fellow traveller, was also decisive.

At the beginning of the 1970s, Altamira was recognised as one of the pre-eminent artists of the Conceptual generation as a result of his photographic project *Area of Coincidence*, considered by various critics – among them Filiberto Menna, Renato Barilli, Flavio Caroli, Bernard Lamarche-Vadel, Michel Baudson, Udo Kultermann and Flaminio Gualdoni – as one of the most significant works of the Conceptual period.

His collaboration with the Marconi studio began in 1979.

In the 1980s, he developed a second creative path, *Ice Dreams*, based on his own dreams, which were recorded, re-elaborated and produced in 3D. During this same period he also began to prepare a volume on contemporary art in collaboration with Filiberto Menna, but which Menna was unable to complete due to his serious illness. However, much of the material produced by Altamira for this book appears in his major publications: the contemporary section of the Rizzoli manual *Arte nel tempo*, and in his essay *Il secolo sconosciuto* on twentieth century art.

As an artist Altamira has held about fifty solo shows in Italy and abroad and has participated in important group exhibitions, among them *Linee dell'arte in Italia '60-'77* at the Civic Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art (GAM), Turin (invited by Filiberto Menna); the 1980 Venice Biennale (as part of special project *Chronografie*, curated by Gianfranco Bettetini); *Nuova Immagine* at the Milan Triennale (curated by Flavio Caroli); *Cosa fanno oggi i concettuali?* [What Are Conceptual Artists Doing Today?], held in 1986 at the Rotonda della Besana, Milan (curated by Renato Barilli); and the 2005 Rome Quadrennial (invited by Luciano Caramel).

In 2012 he was invited to take part in the exhibition *Addio anni '70*, curated by Francesco Bonami, and in 2013, the *Wunderkammer* exhibition at the Poldi Pezzoli Museum and Gallerie d'Italia in Milan, curated by Martina Mazzotta.

His latest work was shown at the Marconi Foundation in Milan in 2008, 2010 and 2014.

Until 2013, Adriano Altamira taught Contemporary Art History for the two-year specialist course in photography at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts, for which he was initially the coordinator, and Psychology of Art for the three-year course, also at the Brera.

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**Opening hours:** Tuesday-Saturday 10-13, 15-19

**Free entrance**

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