

JIMMIE DURHAM

Sound and Silliness

An “immaterial” exhibition devoted to the artist who has made cultural and political resistance the focus of his research

5 February – 24 April 2016

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#JimmieDurham

Rome 4 February 2016. Through his works the artist, poet and political activist **Jimmie Durham** (USA, 1940) challenges the dominion of Eurocentric culture, promoting a new cultural nomadism, choosing forms and idioms that have never been homologated and reaffirming the right to opposition. The exhibition **Jimmie Durham. Sound and Silliness** has been curated for MAXXI by Hou Hanru and Giulia Ferracci and opens on 5 February through to 24 April 2016.

Installed in Gallery 5, **Jimmie Durham. Sound and Silliness** was conceived by the artist around two main concepts: the works were to be envisaged and created in Italy and they were to represent “immaterial experimentation.” Hence the exhibition is comprised of **two audio works and two silent videos**, created in Italy between 2006 and 2013. Chosen by the artist in a sort of “deal” he devised with MAXXI’s architecture the works offer visitors a long- lasting experience.

The presentation opens in Gallery 5 with the audio work realised together with Maria Thereza Alves ***I rondoni di Porta Capuana*** (2013), presented by RAM Radioartemobile at the Nuit Blanche in Paris in 2013. The work features the singing of the swallows at Porta Capuana in Naples, an important crossroads and a focal point of cultural aggregation in the city since the early 20th Century. Two short videos are screened in the centre of the hall. ***A Proposal for a New International Genuflexion in Promotion of World Peace*** (2007) is a performance in which the artist mimes a genuflexion with a kiss and a bow, inviting spectators to imagine a new gesture for the promotion of world peace. The second video, ***Fleur de pas mal*** (2005), develops a subject central to the artist’s thinking, that is, *stone* used in ever different ways, at times as a instrument of destruction, at others as an object in movement. A large stone falls into a bucket of paint, producing an explosion of colour or a flower of emulsion. The review is completed by ***Domestic Glass*** (2006) an audio extension of the work presented by RAM Radioartemobile in 2006. The work transmits the sound of glass breaking that remind us that in the end everything is transformed and nothing its destroyed.

Through these works the artist creates an abstract space, an alternative and innovative proposal with respect to an exhibition of objects. All the works making up the exhibition deal with certain fundamental themes running through Durham’s work: the transformation of matter, the invention of a new narrative idiom, reflection on the identity of the West.

The title of the exhibition ***Sound and Silliness*** derives from reflection on the meaning of our actions: according to the artist, in fact, frivolity can provide a sort of detached courage when examining the great issues of life.

Contrasting commonly held beliefs, Durham describes how the conflict between technology and nature may be alleviated by birdsong, how the clamour, the colour and the weight of matter may give life to an “anti-monument” and how hope may flood the world through a gesture of peace.

With Durham, a reference point for the avant-garde, an internationally respected and recognised figure, MAXXI is proceeding with its mission of presenting the work of the great masters who anticipated the practices of the latest generations of artists. Known for his ironic and ethical art that at times has a Duchampian edge, Durham is an artist who uses the most diverse idioms, from drawing to writing, from assemblages to complex sculptures, from performance to video and through to architecture, tackling themes ranging from the paradoxes of western culture to the ties between political and religious powers.

Jimmie Durham was born in the United States in 1940. He has been an artist, essayist and poet from the early 1960s and currently lives in Europe. He studied art from 1969 at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Geneva.

During the 1970 he was a leading political activist in the American Indian Movement and founder of the International Indian Treaty Council as well as a representative at the United Nations. Durham's works frequently but not exclusively challenge the idea of architecture, the monumental works and tackle the issue of national identities, deconstructing the stereotypes and prejudices on which part of western culture is based. Durham has participated in numerous international exhibitions such as *Documenta* (1992, 2012), the *Whitney Biennial* in New York (1993, 2003, 2014), the Venice Biennale (1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2013), the Istanbul Biennale (1997, 2013) and many other group shows. His solo shows include: the ICA in London and the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels (1993), Museo Madre in Naples (2008, 2012), Portikus in Frankfurt (2010), the Serpentine Gallery in London (2015), Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (NBK) (2015), Fondazione Querini Stampalia (2015); the retrospectives include: MuHKA, Antwerp (2012); Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2009).

The press kit and images of the exhibition can be downloaded from the Reserved Area of the Fondazione MAXXI's website at <http://www.fondazionemaxxi.it/area-riservata/> by typing in the password **areariservatamaxxi**

MAXXI – National Museum of XXI Century Arts

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opening hours: 11.00 AM – 7.00 PM (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday)

11.00 AM – 10.00 PM (Saturday) Closed Mondays, 1 May and 25 December

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