

## Public privacy

Public privacy, between public and private; from place to place, here and elsewhere. Mobility and sense of belonging. Distance and coexistence, what we share and what divides us. The inveterate uniqueness of every individual. These are some of Nasan Tur's fundamental themes.

Of Turkish origin, born at Offenbach in Germany and leading the kind of international existence that so many artists do today, Nasan Tur uses a range of techniques and instruments to tackle crucial questions of the present day. His perspective is sometimes an ironic one, but no less serious for that, evidently deriving from a personal experience.

His early works include *Vergesse nicht den Duft der Pfefferminze* (Don't forget the smell of peppermint) and *Self-portrait*. The former is a photographic self-portrait of large dimensions; showing the artist standing, his head resting on the shoulder of his mother, whose figure is on a slightly bigger scale, the image speaks, in a simple way, of the unique nature of family ties and the sense of transmission from generation to generation within the family unit.

In *Self-portrait* the artist has sprouted a thick, exotic moustache to match more closely the traditional image of the «Turkish man»: apparently little more than a detail. In reality the intervention represents an opportunity to find out to what extent conventions still hold sway, how decisive an effect the stereotype can have on the individual's existence; and it prompts a reflection on who we are, on how we present ourselves, on the sometimes glaring discrepancy between the way we perceive ourselves and the way we are seen by others.

With his subsequent interventions, some of them intended for public spaces, Nasan Tur has continued, through a variety of media and solutions, to investigate those areas in which individual and collective awareness intersect: clichés, the rituals that punctuate daily life, conformism, the language of power and its ability to influence the individual, the sense of belonging and the construction of otherness.

Among his more recent works: *Was ich euch schon immer sagen wollte* (What I always wanted to tell you), consisting of a microphone left at the disposal of passers-by so that each of them has the opportunity to turn him or herself, for a moment, into an active player on the public stage. And *Backpacks*, a set of rucksacks in which the artist has assembled everything needed to perform a specific function: cooking for someone, singing or making a speech in public, staging a demonstration, sabotaging... The backpacks are freely available. They can be borrowed and used. It is up to the public to choose what to do with them and where.

And in *Arms*, Nasan Tur has cut down images of speeches by well-known political figures to leave only their arms, to reveal both common and distinctive features of the language of rhetoric.

The exhibition *Public Sculpture* is made up of a series of works created especially for the purpose.

*Public sculptures - Milano* is a series of precious sculptures whose kernel consists of small pieces of scrap found in the rubbish and then coated with a layer of fine gold. In this way it expresses the regenerative force of art, capable of imparting value to something that appeared to have come to the end of its life cycle. But then it is the world that regains possession of the fruits of his art: in fact Nasan Tur leaves the sculptures in the street, at the mercy of whoever wants to carry them off. It only takes a few moments for someone to notice them. At that point the range of possible reactions is very wide. And the fate of the sculptures will remain cloaked in mystery forever.

*Human Behaviours* is a multiple slideshow, with hundreds of pictures of passers-by taken in different European cities, rigorously organized into categories. We live constantly under the watchful eye of the CCTV camera, individuals with bar codes whose every move is monitored. We are used to being labelled, pigeonholed forever on the strength of superficial stereotypes. With the result that we end up keeping tabs on each other, defining, equating and distinguishing, giving rise to phenomena of social inclusion and exclusion based on parameters fixed at random. All Nasan Tur does is to take this tendency to an ironic extreme, organizing his collection on the basis of attitudes that are in no way exceptional, that are indeed hackneyed and commonplace.

But paradoxically it is precisely the absolute ordinariness of the portraits he has catalogued that allows the variegated diversity of our everyday universe to emerge. It is the same thing that emerges in *Milano* says: here Nasan Tur draws our attention to and stimulates our awareness of the messages conveyed by the graffiti on the walls of those dense and chaotic jumbles of lives that are our cities. Passing over the rhetoric of the expression of collective feelings and the spontaneity of gesture and sign, the artist focuses on the verbal content of those phrases, capable of pithily conveying subjective moods, stories,

memories, needs and aspirations, anger and the deepest and most human of desires. A contrast to the formal rigor of Milano says is provided by the constantly shifting, kaleidoscopic installation Mirror Sculpture, a sort of chandelier hung from the ceiling that turns on its central axis and projects rays of light. Cutting, captivating and sinister in the way that it alludes to our shattered, fragmented image, a mirror of the anxieties and anguishes of the contemporary world, Mirror Sculpture speaks of our mutant, multiple and complex nature and our loss of references: we who are torn to shreds, we who are continually remodelling ourselves. It speaks of our sense of danger, of insecurity that can turn into anxiety-inducing pressure and fear; fear of a new cultural diversity which is wealth, but which brings with it destabilizing differences and tensions. It speaks of a clear, explicit, unequivocal violence; and of a society that has made itself the mirror of that violence.

The invitation to the exhibition, designed by the artist specially for the occasion, constitutes an edition in 1500 copies.

Gabi Scardi