

LIUBA

The Finger and the Moon Project

From Luca Panaro

The most interesting quality I find in artists is their ability to be in tune with the time they are living in. They are able to gather those aspects of the present that normally escape our normal perception of reality. Every era is defined by important cultural transformations, which are only clearly understandable once they belong to the past. Instead, a good artist is able to understand the cultural potential of a phenomenon before it is explicitly accepted by a given society.

Today more than ever we live in a society built on “networking”. Unlike human relationships in the past, modern relationships are mostly kept up over long distances. This is possible thanks to technology that allows us to communicate in real-time. Hence, it goes without saying that the world of Art has to face this new reality as well.

As part of the project called “The Finger and the Moon”, the artist Liuba decided to utilise these new technologies. She set up an expositive, performative and multimedia event which the public found of great interest.

This work is characterized by the digital connection established between a series of galleries spread out all over the world, where each gallery is invited to simultaneously broadcast the very same performance live through a data transmitting network.

We can say that internet represents the fulfilment of man's innate desire of ubiquity, and that the work of the artist Liuba is a tangible manifestation of this desire.

The feeling of simultaneously being in different places, normally given to the Gods only, is now a human feeling as well, thanks to the WEB.

The success of this technology resides in the chance it gives the public to create multiple “I's” through the medium of a digital social network.

In *The Finger and the Moon #2* Liuba shows she understands this aspect of our time, by aiming her research on this subject. Man attains ubiquity through modern technologies, but also through the type of message transmitted. Infact, the central theme of the performance revolves around the main religions of the world, by showing the similarities between different manners of prayer.

The place chosen by Liuba for her performative work is so unusual as full of symbolism, it is in fact Saint Peter's Square in Vatican City.

The same may be said about the artist's dress, singularly exemplary, it was created in consultation with the stylist Elisabetta Bianchetti. It is a dress similar to the one used by Christian nuns, but it has details that permits Liuba to assume Muslim and Jewish prayer positions, Buddhist meditation positions, and different Hindu yoga positions all in the same dress.

This performance was preceded by *The Finger and the Moon #1*, artwork accomplished in 2007 for the inauguration of the 52° “Venice Biennial”.

But in the second part of this project Liuba shares a part of her performance with the public. In the video obtained from the first performance of the project, she decided precisely what she desired to show.

Instead, in *The Finger and the Moon #2* she doesn't try to control the video outcome of the performance, just as a person who relies on modern technologies. The goal of the artist is

to establish a connection with the audience of her performances. This participation with her unaware but curious public is a main component of her work.

It must be clear by now that this artistic project is a reflection of the tolerance, targeting the acceptance of diversity, the research of a connection with the divinity, to be reached through several ritual behaviours. But it criticizes as well the arrogance of religion, the existence of one only God over the others , bringing to the mental narrowness and the fanaticism. In the East it is said: «If someone shows you the moon, look at the moon not at the finger pointing at it». Religion is that finger, it shows us a way, but to follow it is necessary to look beyond, without entrenching ourselves in one only credo, but accepting the diversity as a necessary source for the attainment of our desire for the infinite.