

[1990]

The inist sign

A face, a flower, the sea before becoming an ensemble of forms and colours are signs; a shout, a cry, a laugh before becoming sounds are signs; a mood, a sensation, a dream are signs. Signs are hidden even behind the best compositions of old poetry and painting. The sign can be graphic (as in this exhibition) or sonorous or of another nature. It was necessary to trace it. As a result of a long incubation, we began to offer the first examples in 1980 (after «centuries of idiotic generations» dedicated to imitating, said Rimbaud, whose vision had gone beyond his accomplishments), by rediscovering precisely that sign which in antiquity was inserted in the message and would then represent the origin of alphabets. With the difference that we, having seen all the civilizations unrolled on our desks, glory and crime judged, we reach the sign by way of the significance and not by way of representations of an object. Let us continue: more signs were needed for our ancestors to represent a concept (for example, family, village); more signs are needed for us to relate stories, each one being a highly lyrical moment. (In any case, one has to consider that in bygone epochs many monuments and objects were covered with writings, but only a few people had the task of deciphering them; and one also has to consider that some signs, believed to be magical, surpassed a simple representation of the concrete: the mystery remains). Instead, we confer to the sign a value of creation, not of imitation, of knowledge not of photographic reality. The signs are an orchestration of sentiments and thoughts, the multiple and global vision that life presents us. And they capture the order that is born out of chaos. We have called them «inis».

Not contaminated, for as far as is possible, by baptismal manias, we have let our poems, which exclude conventional words, be called «abstract», for a more universal representation of sentiments. Inis compose them, new words, pure phonemes, together or separately. Sometimes it might happen that you encounter what in appearance seems a common term, but in that case it never concerns a primary word because it is dependant on the context and used as intellectual subversion or antiphrasis or to evoke the past. And we have let our entire production, that has long since crossed the division in creative sectors, be called

«poetry» (we have heard that it is dead: true and false). Therefore, our sincere reader, “our equal, our brother”, this is an exhibition of Poetry.

Now let us pass on to the contingent and prepare a brief *Guided Tour*. First of all; the title: *Inism 1980-1990*. As noted, Inism comes from I.N.I (Infinitesimal Novator International), a current which emerged in Paris on January 3rd, 1980. This exhibition is not, and does not intend to be, a selection of our production during the period of more than ten years of activity; proof of this is found in the dates of the works that are recent or very recent indeed and, for the most part, unpublished; the exhibition, then, is a homage to a period that remains invulnerable in our memory because it has united us, encouraged us, and made us conscious. In Rome, in the entrance hall, before entering the space set up for the true and proper exhibition, we have organized a collection of images, documents, publications that illustrate some of the moments of our activity; this set-up will be repeated in Cassino at the First International Festival of Cinematography Schools.

Let us continue: “organized chance” has wanted that in the majority of the works on display there recur two common components: the use of the symbols of international phonetics and the name «Ini» represented in various creative contexts. The first request corresponds to the imperative necessity of transmitting oral sounds in a code that is not commonly used; in this case the originality of Inism is not so much underlined in invention as it is in the systematic creative use, verified precisely, as is evident at this exhibition, in the validity of its better works. We give the same importance to this language as the futurists gave to words in freedom or the surrealists to verbal autonomy; and if before one or the other there were sporadic examples, they should be thought of as paternal forebearers because they created a system. Nothing to do whatsoever with the intent of a common language: pure sounds of every grammar for «a language common to all the senses»: not for the vocabulary but for the sentiment of every man. In reference to the name «Ini», another *leitmotiv* of this exhibition, it is normal that it should surpass its role of simple identification to be able to fill itself, in the creative setting, of multiple significance as a supreme «inia» in which time and sound, space and colour are fused together; as in those moments when *one sees*, upon a return from a total search or a confusion or an emotion or, simpler still, from an everyday encounter, apparently casual, with a glance, a square, a sound. And not only the Roman muses from the Pyramid, Bologna Square, Casilina, Tor de' Cenci have suggested the Idea, but even those from the Adriatic and beyond

Quamvis claris sit coloribus picta vel poësis vel oratio, every work on exhibit speaks for itself. It says that what it says. According to your culture, sensitivity and emancipation. And according to the moment. Exhibited in a large museum, it would become for the most part only a document *to be seen*. In addition, if an author succeeded in describing in words the meaning of one of his canvases, you would doubt that work! It is not necessary, then, to speak about the authors present but let us mention, however briefly, those who solely for practical reasons could not join us. Owing to the initiative of Gaetano Marinò (for the exposition arrangement) and François Proia (for the catalogue), recent inists, with the collaboration of Laura Aga-Rossi and Angelo Merante, inists from the beginning, this exhibition is presented, therefore, above all as a Roman appointment in spite of the presence of Abruzzo, Florence, Paris, Sweden and Perù. The absentees are numerous; a list would lengthen this text by a page. Let us recall, nevertheless, Argentinean Inism founded by Julio Carreras h., author of *Cuentos ini* and a supporter, along with Esteban Olocco, Hugo Fiorentino and Daniel Doñate of the *Primer Manifiesto INI Argentino* (Santiago del Estero, July 22, 1986); Spanish Inism, represented by the group Koinèⁱⁿⁱ (from which we have the magazine of the same name), prompted by Francisco J. Molero Prior, editor of the movement of *El Inismo. Manifiesto* (Collado Villalba, Madrid, January/February 1990); American Inism, on which Pietro Ferrua has recently finished writing a monograph. They are three parts of the same face: the Argentinean *front*, revolutionary in its cultural context, radiates with the Inism of the signs of ancient civilizations, read for the first time, precisely when one believed, like Mallarmé, to have read every book; the Spanish *eyes* burn with the desire to see everything, to recompose everything, with a mental iris and retina, for a glance that is not only merely national; the American *hearing* tries to listen to new voices that echo from a “post avant-garde” and tend to fuse into the name of a freedom that has respect only for techniques “found” more or less recently, but, which are now decisively surpassed. Parisian Inism, however, is validly, even if not extensively, represented here. Diverse Inisms for an Inism that, as is seen, is neither a school nor a group, but a precise movement taken, from time to time, as geographically circumscribed, and a current when taken in its entirety.

Schools, on the other hand, as Apollinaire called the proliferate groups of his time, still exist; and the nonchalance with which they represent things of the past to the ingenuous (or simply the ignorant) amazes us! They are divided in two: those who strictly collaborate and work with us

out of affinity and those who more or less furtively oppose us. The latter, who generally have obtained some success (above all regional or national) in a past which is now distant, strenuously defend borders that no one wants to cross: if on the technical plane some superficial affinity is noted, on the ethical and substantial planes they resemble us as a fig resembles a boat. The former are often the cause of great misunderstandings because rash conclusions and disproportionate relationships are drawn from the collaborations. These particularly curious excesses are often the work of some «iniphiles», our supporters therefore, or those who are indiscriminately enthusiastic about the avant-garde and who, in a vein of erudite reference, celebrate marriages and affiliations which we never thought of. And sometimes it's exactly erudite information that puts them in the wrong; for example, it amazes us how still today one has still not united us with Sound Poetry (with Henri Chopin as its major representative), with which we have at least some noteworthy discoveries in common, such as that of Charles Cros who, before Edison, invented the phonograph to give sound to poetry.

[...]

This is the essential. *A tout prix et avec tous les airs, même dans des Voyages métaphysiques.— Mais plus* alors.

Gabriele-Aldo Bertozzi

[1990]

Translated by Susie De Ciantis

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