







Marco Poloni

Codename: Osvaldo, 2014-2017

Codename: Osvaldo fans out from a biographical thread, that of the charismatic and complex figure of Giangiacomo Feltrinelli. Italian millionaire and Guevarist revolutionary, Feltrinelli founded the eponymous publishing house in Milan in 1954 and was active in the European anti-imperialist movements of the 60s and 70s under the battle name of compañero Osvaldo. Feltrinelli's insurrectionist work isn't approached through a biographical lens, but as a shadow line of a rhizomatic narrative about repressed chapters of the construction of Italian national identity.

The work presents itself as a constellation articulated in six *Case Studies*, themselves large-scale works. The spatial syntax of the work is further articulated by ten *Cactus Studies*. Rather than being constituted as an indexical chain, this constellation forms a porous narrative which generates meaning through the gaps between its elements. In exhibition, the work becomes a laboratory project which goes beyond addressing historical events, becoming a reflection on the loose connectivity of the revolutionary galaxy of that period and on our fragmentary knowledge of it, as well as on the structure of personal and prosthetic memory.

This constellation of works is comprised of 16 elements:

- *Case Study #01: The Pistol of Monika Ertl*, 2014
- *Case Study #02: The Orgosolo Laboratory Project*, 2015
- *Case Study #03: Una Cuba mediterranea*, 2017
- *Case Study #04: Not how things are real, but how things really are*, 2016
- *Case Study #05: Scouting Locations for Una Cuba mediterranea: Poligono Interforze di Salto di Quirra (PISQ)*, 2016
- *Case Study #06: Shot Up Street Signs (Objets troués)*, 2016
- *Cactus Studies #01 to #16*, 2016: selection of 9 elements

The spatial set-up for this constellation of works is designed to break with the paradigm of the white cube. Specifically, the walls and the lighting of the exhibition space are remodeled to signify the workshop of a factory.

Codename: Osvaldo is accompanied by Special Editions and Publications.

All installation views, unless specified: Centre culturel suisse (CCS) · Paris, 2016, Photographs by Marc Damage



Cactus Study #05: Modelo de propagación

Cactus Graft (Opuntia Ficus-Indica found in Sardinia grafted on an Opuntia Ficus-Indica found in Cuba), pot in concrete



Case Study #01: The Pistol of Monika Ertl

The Pistol of Monika Ertl is a large-scale constellation of photographs, 16mm films and texts which narrates the killing in 1971 of Roberto Quintanilla, the General Consul of Bolivia in Hamburg, by a young German woman, Monika Ertl. As head of the Bolivian secret police, Quintanilla had captured Che Guevara in the Bolivian jungle in October 1967, and commanded his summary execution. For the revolutionary underground, Quintanilla had to be eliminated. Monika Ertl, daughter of cinematographer and photographer Hans Ertl, the director of photography for Leni Riefenstahl's controversial 1938 documentary film *Olympia*, settled with her family at La Paz at the end of WW2. In the late 60s Monika joined the Bolivian Liberation Army, and received her military training in Chile and Cuba. The revolver she used to terminate Quintanilla was given to her by Feltrinelli.

I owe much credit to the German writer Jürgen Schreiber, author of a book on Monika Ertl, for sharing his research materials with me.

28 elements: 25 pigment ink prints, 2 continuous projection 16mm films (loops of 24 secs and 34 secs, respectively), 1 text panel

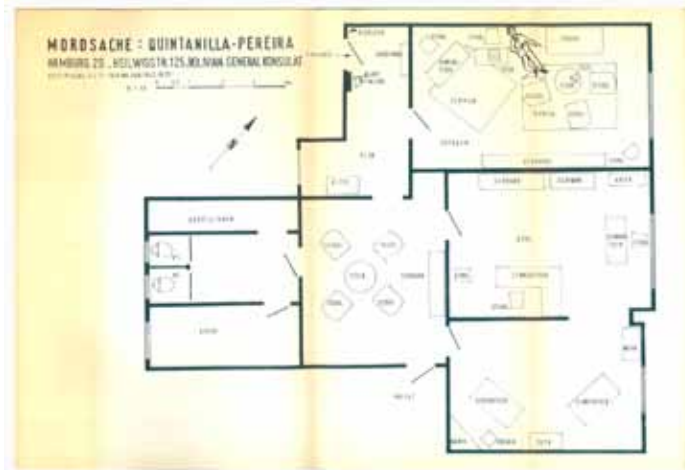
















On Thursday April 1st, 1971, at 9:40 a.m., a young woman appeared at the General Consulate of Bolivia at Heßligstraße 125 in Eppendorf, a cosy neighborhood in Hamburg. She asked to see the consular general Quintanilla to gather information about a trip to Bolivia. The woman was seated briefly in the waiting room, then was led by the secretary into the consular general's office. What came next happened quickly and likely played out as follows. Quintanilla greeted the young woman politely and invited her to sit in an armchair, seating himself in the couch in front of her. Just as he sat down, the woman, still smiling, pulled a revolver and shot him point blank. The consular general received three bullets in the upper right torso and fell to his right, falling on the floor between the couch and a small office on which stood an Adler mechanical typewriter, pushing a corner of the carpet with one foot.

The consular general's wife, who was in the next room, rushed into the office and attacked the young woman. A fight ensued, in which the woman lost her jacket, handbag and wig. The woman was able to free herself from the grip of the consular wife and run down the stairs out into the street, where an Opel Kadett was parked in front of the consulate waiting for her. The driver pulled off and the car disappeared into the city centre.

The wounded consular lay under the gaze of a portrait of Simon Bolívar, the leader of the war for independence of the Hispanic-American colonies. Oddly enough, the wall calendar indicated March 22nd. Quintanilla was taken, still alive, to the University Hospital of Eppendorf, where he was pronounced dead at 10:26 a.m. He bled surprisingly little. The report of the autopsy carried out by pathologists

Dr. K. and Dr. N. describes the entry wounds as three dark dots, drawing a triangle with sides of 6, 8 and 10 centimeters. Or a V like Victory, as in the inscription in thick letters written with a felt marker on the flap of paper that the police found in the woman's handbag: "Victoria o Muerte! E.L.N." The Motto of the Bolivian Ejército de Liberación Nacional. The positions of the exit wounds under the right shoulder blade suggested that the assassin, still standing, shot Quintanilla as he was sitting down. One of the shots, the fatal one, pierced through the heart's atrium, causing internal bleeding resulting in cardiac arrest. This explains the absence of blood on the fine purpura of his office. Section VI of the report describes the measured weight of the internal organs: brain 1420, heart 125, kidneys 205, liver 1620, spleen 190 grams. All within the normal range. The heart is always smaller than people think.

Before his appointment in Spring 1970 as consular general in Germany, Colonel Roberto "Toto" Quintanilla was the head of the Bolivian secret police. He was responsible for the torture of hundreds of opponents of the regime and for the murder of many. In 1967 he was tasked to hunt down Ernesto "Che" Guevara and the E.L.N., the guerrilla group Guevara founded, in the Bolivian jungle. He led a Company of Bolivian soldiers trained and equipped by U.S. Green Berets and guided by CIA operatives. On October 8th a Platoon of Bolivian Army Rangers captured Guevara. Quintanilla commanded his summary execution on October 9th, and oversaw the amputation of his hands by a military doctor. Two years later, on November 9th, 1969, Quintanilla captured Insi Peredo, Guevara's successor at the command of E.L.N. in La Paz, and tortured him to death.

More than his entanglement with the deaths of Guevara and Peredo, it is the atrocity of severing Guevara's hands, and the stupidity of posing with arrogance and vanity aside Peredo's cadaver, cigarette in hand, as though to tap the ashes onto the body, article case in the other hand, in business-as-usual manner, that aged the butcher's face. The bastard had to be physically eliminated.

Authoritarian regimes exhibit dead revolutionaries as trophies, starting with the 1871 photograph *Comandante José Martí cervatillo* attributed to André-Adolphe-Eugène Duclet. Revolutionaries don't. As Serge Deney once said, the vast majority of images that make it into the media are those that represent power – *le pouvoir* –, that "work" for it. The snapshot of Quintanilla's dead body stands as an exception. The image was taken surreptitiously at the morgue at Eppendorf Hospital by two reporters of the *Neue Revue* magazine, competitor to the better known *stern* magazine. It was published in the days following the assassination. The visual story of Che Guevara's death would not have come full circle without this stolen snapshot.

The pistol used by the assassin was a submachine Colt Cobra .38 Special, serial number 212607 –JW–. Revolutionaries operate with stolen weapons to avoid being traced. Quintanilla's killer probably didn't know that her pistol had been legally purchased. Otherwise she would not have left it behind, equivalent to dropping a business card. The police found out that the revolver had been purchased by the Italian billionaire publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli in Milan on July 18th, 1968, at de Mico, a weapons dealer in via Cosse Rossa 1, for 85,000 Lire.

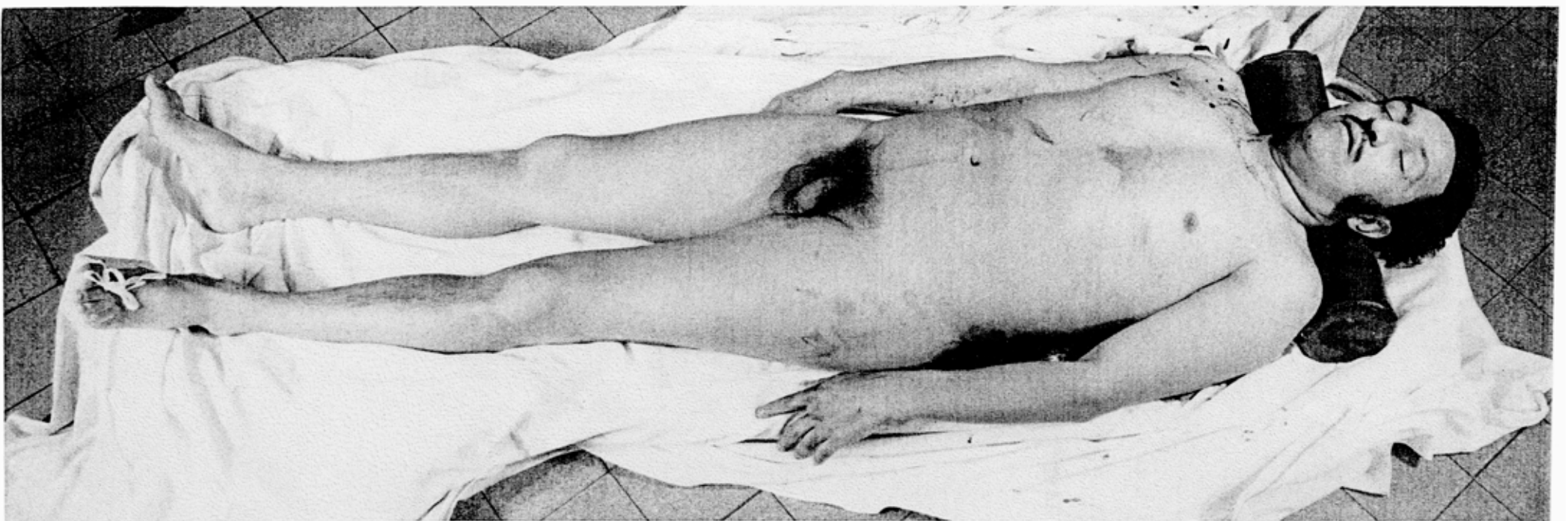
The assassination of Quintanilla was one of the most spectacular political attacks ever to have been carried out in Germany. Within a month's time the assassin was identified: Monika Ertl, the favorite daughter of cinematographer and photographer Hans Ertl, the director of photography for Lutz Rehfuss' controversial 1984 documentary film *Ökonomie* about the 1976 Berlin Olympics. Ertl had settled with his family in Bolivia after the war ended. What pushed Monika Ertl to break with her bourgeois life in La Paz and go underground, joining the E.L.N. with the combat name of Imilla – "infant" in Quechua – remains unclear. What is known is that she became the lover of Insi Peredo. Her radicalization happened progressively, during her training in Bolivia, Chile and Cuba, prior to her mission in Hamburg.

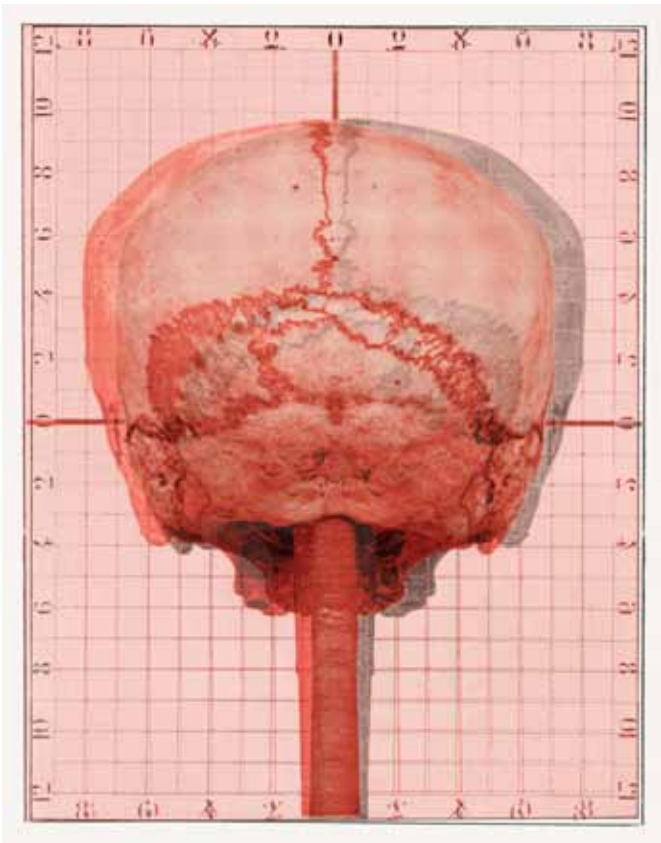
It is likely that Feltrinelli handed the weapon over to Ertl on a boat moored in a port on the *Côte d'Azur* in early 1971. Police reports state generally that she had been seen with the publisher in 1970 and 1971. One such instance is at least factual. A report from the Kantonspolizei Zürich states that both Ertl and Feltrinelli registered in different hotels in Zürich on March 26th, 1971, that is, about ten days prior to the Quintanilla murder, she at the "Rothaus," he at the "Simpson." Moreover, Feltrinelli was likely the only person with the means to finance Ertl's 11 000 km journey from Bolivia to Europe, as well as her movements within the continent.

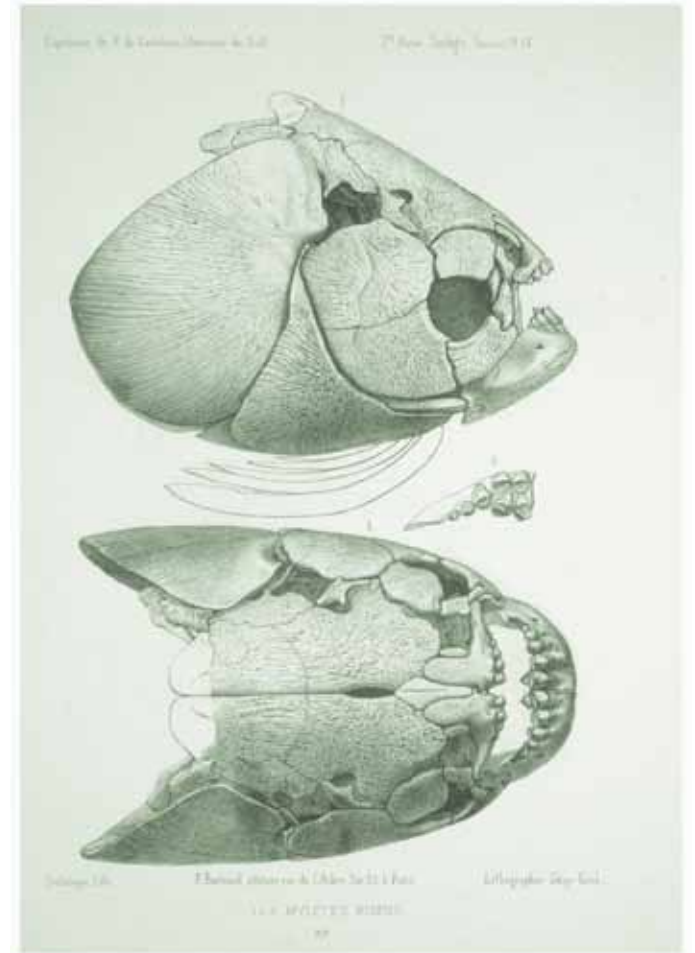
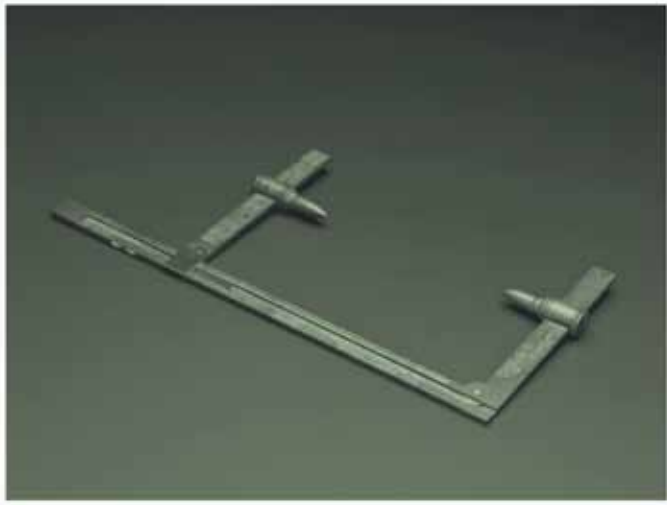
Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, the heir of one of the richest families in Milano, had founded his publishing house in 1954. He quickly gained recognition in Europe through a few smart editorial moves. His political radicalization happened after meeting Fidel Castro at La Havana in 1964, after which he became

computero Ovaldó. In 1967 he travelled again to La Havana and La Paz, where he planned to meet Rigob Debray. He was quickly arrested by Quintanilla, and released two days after thanks to the intervention of the Italian Government. It is conceivable that he financed his realisation from that moment. It is also conceivable that he first met Monika Ertl in La Paz. This was before the death of Guevara, after which Castro gave Feltrinelli the manuscript of Guevara's *Diario del "Che" en Bolivia* which he published in Italy in world premiere in 1968 concurrently with the Cuban edition. The profits from this publication were entirely given to the revolutionary movements in Latin America. In 1969 Feltrinelli had gone underground because of his faked attributed involvement in the terrorist bank attack of Piazza Fontana in Milano. He established his own radical left-wing paramilitary group, the G.A.P., *Gruppo di azione partigiana*, and then turned up dead on March 15th, 1972 under a high-voltage power line pylon in Segrate, East of Milano. He was planning a blackout to encompass much of the city. According to his companions he was killed by the accidental explosion of the dynamite sticks he was handling.

In 1972, after her return to Bolivia, Ertl and Debray plotted the kidnapping of ex-SS Chief in Lyon Klaus Barbie, who was working in La Paz for the Ministry of Interiors under the name Klaus Altmann, and with whom she was acquainted. The plan was to deliver him to French authorities for trial. Barbie, head of the plan, and had her intercepted and killed in May 1973. The photograph of her dead body was widely circulated.

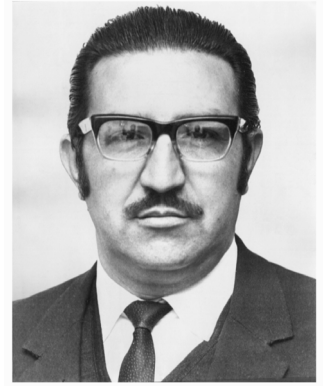
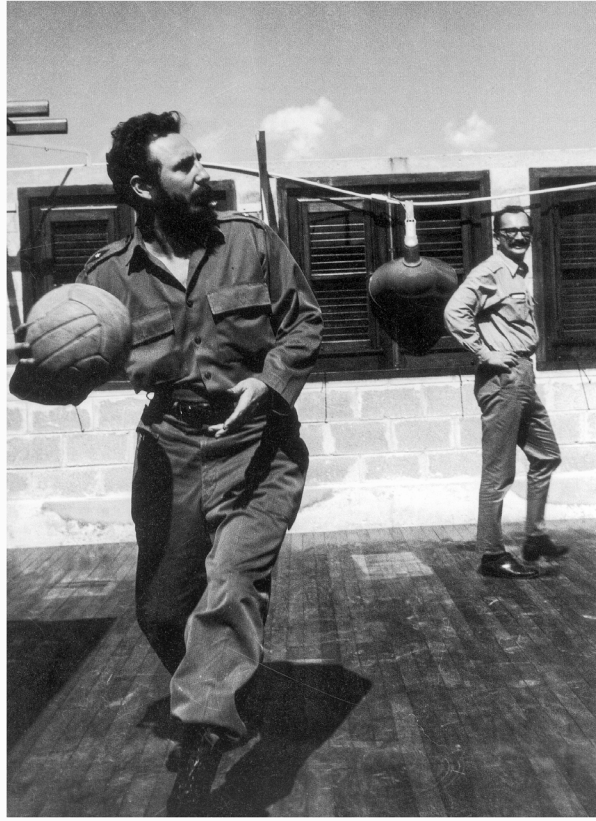


















Cactus Study #08: Prototype of a Cactus Antenna for Pirate FM Radio Transmissions

This work is inspired by Feltrinelli's Radio GAP ("Gruppi d'azione partigiana," Partisan Action Groups). In the early seventies Radio GAP performed pirate radio transmissions using war left-overs. The transmissions were successful at infiltrating the audio of the first channel television news.

The work is based on George O. Squier's 1925 US Patent for Tree Telephony and Telegraphy, and the early seventies experiments of the United States Army Electronics Command on the performance of trees as radio antennas: first with oak trees in New Jersey, then with different trees in tropical jungle forests (the "Panama Canal Zone Experiments").

FM transmitter, microphone, HEMAC (Hybrid Electromagnetic Antenna Coupler), cables, euphorbia (*Euphorbia Eritrea*)

Cactus Study #07: Precolombian Vanitas

Replica of a precolombian female elongated and trephinated skull found in Bolivia, cactus (*Trichocereus Pachanoi Cristata*), obsidian mirror





Cactus study #09: La voce del padrone

Horn speakers, cactuses (*Trichocereus Scopulicola*)
(set of two)

Case Study #02: The Orgosolo Laboratory Project

The atlas of photographs, texts, films and objects titled *The Orgosolo Laboratory Project* was co-authored with Swiss curator Noah Stolz. The work is a visual examination of the events that took place in the late 60s in the village of Orgosolo in central Sardinia. In November 1968 the population dissolved the City Council and established a Popular Assembly in its place – the so-called “four days of the Republic of Orgosolo,” a unique case of self-government in the entire history of postwar Italy. In June 1969 the population of Orgosolo was able to block a war game in nearby Pratobello, defeating the Italian State and taking a stand against a case of Italian internal colonialism. Visual traces to these events are the many propagandist wall graffiti in Orgosolo, whose pictorial language borrows strongly from the South American tradition of murales, the posters belonging to the shared imaginary of post-1968 militancy, and the many militant booklets published and distributed in the area by Feltrinelli.

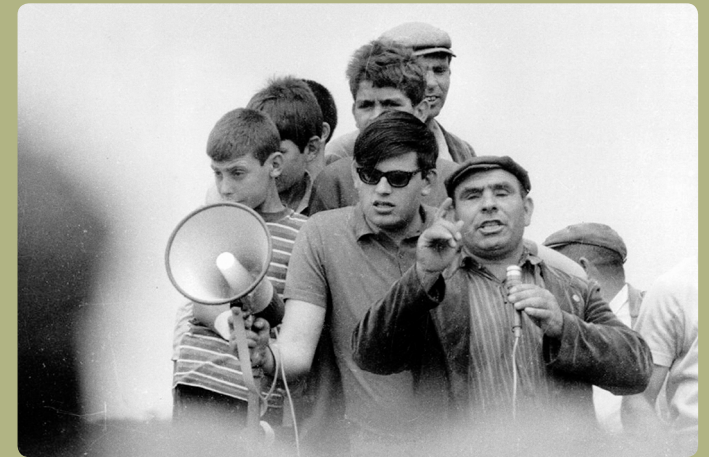
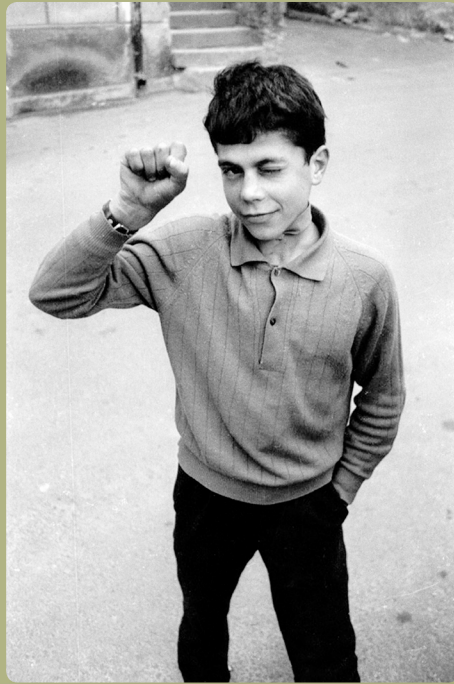
We owe much credit to sardinian autonomist Nicola Dettori for sharing his archive with us.

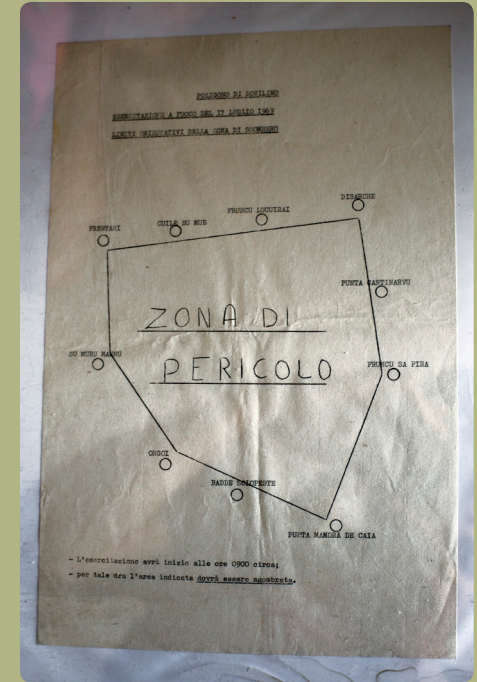
Variable number of elements: 1 continuous slide projection (80 slides), 4 continuous videos, 6 original pamphlets published by Feltrinelli, 5 books, edition of risographic prints: booklet, post-cards and posters





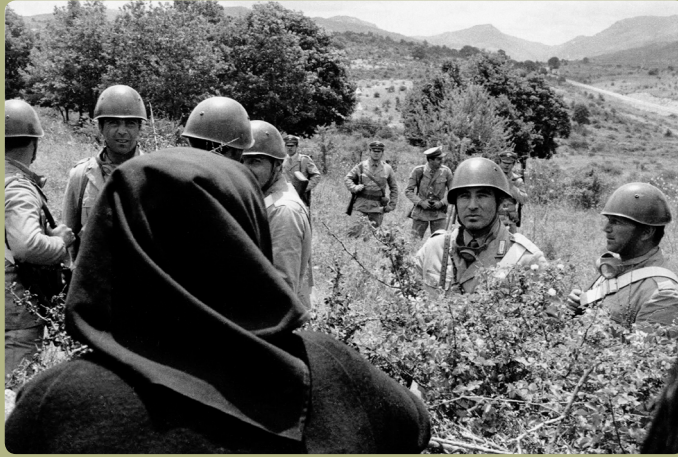














Cactus Study #04: Self-Caged Cactus

Cactus (*Opuntia Ficus-Indica* v. *Reticulata*)

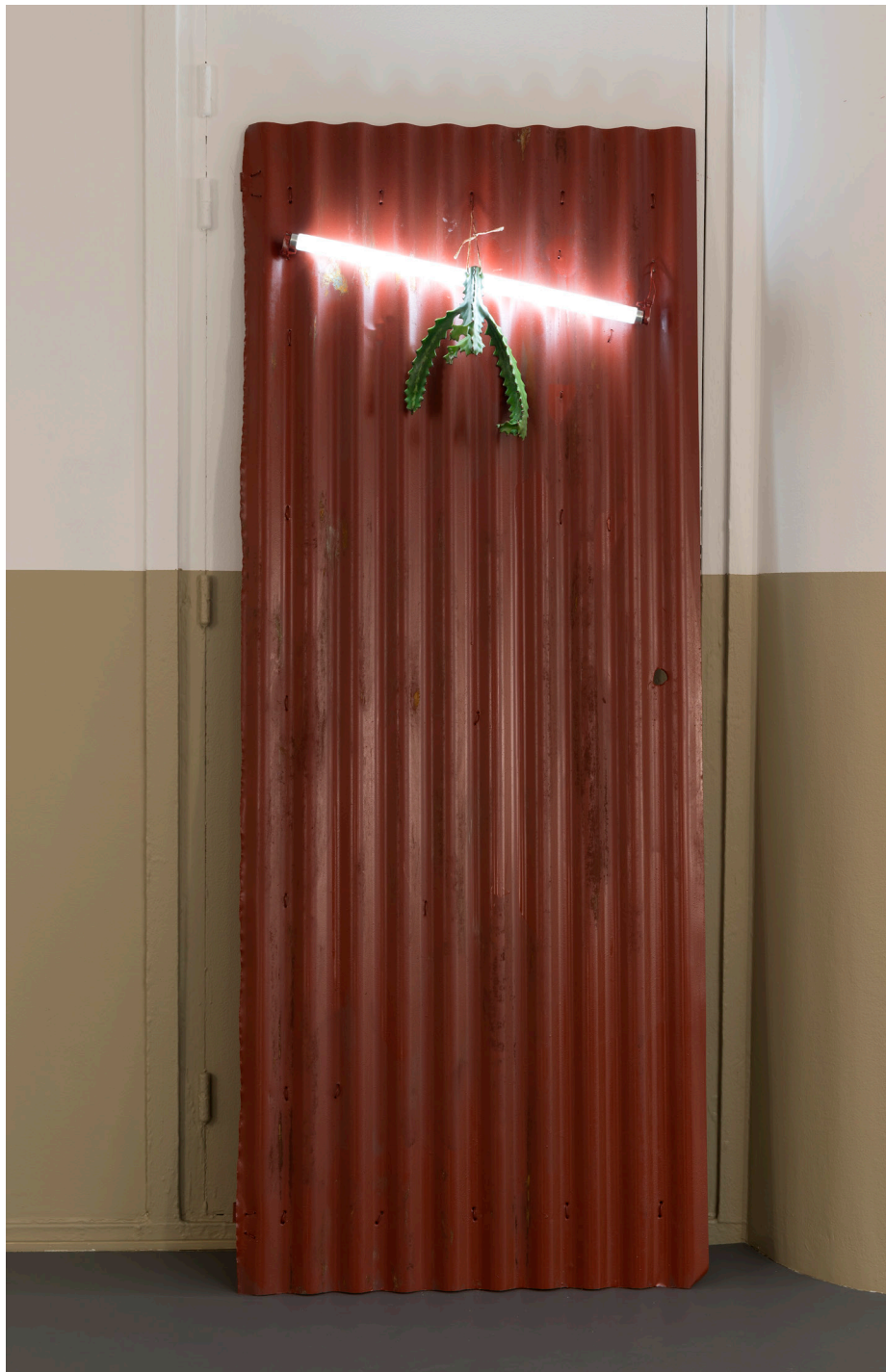




Cactus Study #03: Toothpick Cactus

Cactus (*Cylindropuntia Imbricata*), toothpicks

Next pages: Selection from the 80 slides



Cactus Study #13: Contra el mal ojo

Cactus (*Euphorbia Lactea*), painted corrugated iron sheet, fluorescent tube





Cactus Study #10: Baseball

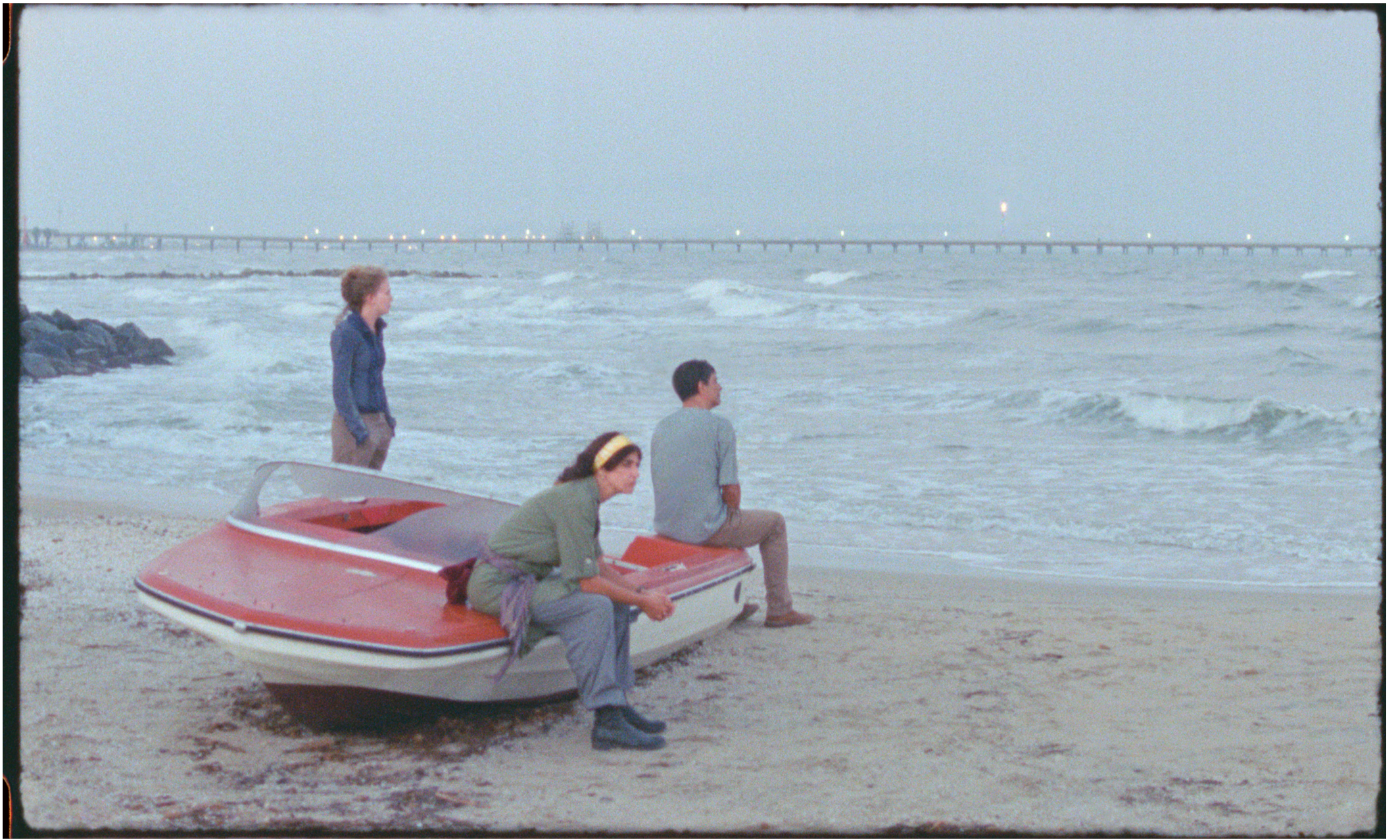
Cactus (*Opuntia Ficus-Indica*), two baseball bats, one medium-sized, one small-sized



Special Edition:

Cactus growing from a dead trunk

Inkjet print on archival paper, 520 x 770 mm



Case Study #03: Una Cuba mediterranea

Una Cuba mediterranea is a filmic essay, scripted and structured as a feature movie. The film takes as its starting point Feltrinelli's tentative to transform Sardinia into a Mediterranean Cuba, by handing over weapons and money to local so-called bandits. "Una Cuba mediterranea" is the film of a short trip through the island: Antonia and her friend Eleonora, respectively filmmaker and visual anthropologist, travel with Giuliano, a Sardinian friend who becomes their guide. They are accompanied by a camera operator and sound recordist. The film follows the characters in their road trip in a Citroën DS – Feltrinelli's car –, as they visit a number of historically significant sites, filming landscapes and recording conversations about the island's problems. The film expands into an anthropological meditation on economic servitude, Sardinian autonomism, and the condition of insularity of Sardinia and of the "South" in general.

Cast

Antonia	Alessandra Roca
Eleonora	Laura Pizzirani
Giuliano	Fausto Siddi

Crew

Direction	Marco Poloni
Scenario	Pier Paolo Lisi, Marco Poloni, Noah Stolz
Image	Heidi Hassan assisted by David Rodriguez
Sound	Rudy Decelière and Adrien Kessler
Executive Production	Riccardo Lisi
Production Assistance	Axel Crettenand
Editing	Orsola Valenti
Color Grading	Gregory Bindschedler
Digital Post-Production	Sorina Reiber
Produced by	The Analogue Island Bureau and The Stella Maris Archive
With the participation of	Teatro Valle Occupato

S-16mm, S-8mm and HD Video on DCP 2K, colour, dolby 5:1, native 15:9 into 16:9, original italian with english subtitles, 62 min

Following pages: Film Stills



















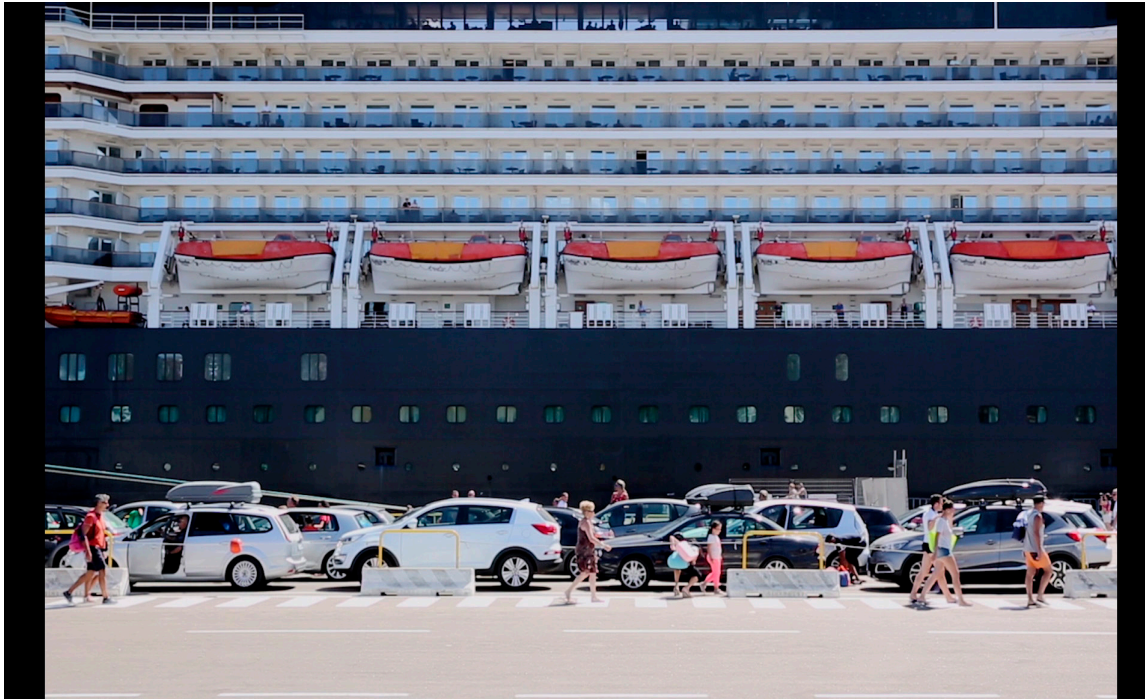






































Cactus Study #12: República bananera

San Pedro cactuses (*Trichocereus Pachanoi*), banana trees (*Musa Basjoo*),
painted corrugated iron sheets





Case Study #04: Not how things are real, but how things really are

Not how things are real, but how things really are is a small set of photographs and text that articulates the opposing worldviews of Michelangelo Antonioni and Giangiacomo Feltrinelli: idealist and metaphysical for the former, Marxist and dialectical for the latter. Both men were attracted to the island of Sardinia, but for very different reasons: Antonioni to build his futuristic villa, a private piece of utopia, Feltrinelli to attempt to put into action his political utopia.

6 elements: five pigment ink prints and one text panel. A ceiling fan complements this set.



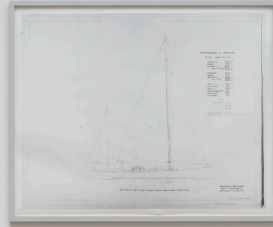


The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the plane was the humidity. It was a warm embrace, a reminder of home. The air was thick with the scent of tropical flowers and the promise of adventure. I had heard that the island was a hidden gem, a place where time seemed to stand still. And now, here I was, standing on the edge of a world I had only dreamed of.

The island was a masterpiece of nature, a place where the land and sea met in perfect harmony. The white sand beaches were as soft as powder, and the turquoise waters were as clear as crystal. The palm trees swayed gently in the breeze, their fronds creating a rhythmic pattern against the sky. It was a paradise that had been waiting for me.

As I walked along the shore, I felt a sense of peace and tranquility that I had never experienced before. The island was a sanctuary, a place where I could escape the stresses of the world and find myself again. The sun was setting, and the sky was painted in shades of orange and pink. The waves were crashing against the shore, creating a symphony of sounds that filled my heart.

I had found my home. This island was my home. It was a place where I could be who I truly was, a place where I could live my life to the fullest. The island was a gift, a gift that I would cherish for the rest of my life. I had found my home, and I was never leaving.





“Non sta mai fermo. Mai... Mai, mai... Io non riesco a guardare a lungo il mare sennò tutto quello che succede in terra non mi interessa più.” It’s never still. Never... Never, never... I can’t look at the sea for long or I lose interest in what’s happening on land. This line is spoken by Giuliana – Monica Vitti – as she gazes at the sea through a window in Michelangelo Antonioni’s 1964 film *Deserto rosso*. With her dreamlike voice, Vitti somehow echoes modernist writer Hermann Broch’s reflection that those who live by the sea can hardly form a single thought of which the sea would not be part. But rather than possessing Giuliana’s mind the water expanse seems to blend with it, forming a continuum with her anxious interiority.

Michelangelo Antonioni chose a beach of coral powder and sand at Budelli in north Sardinia to film the fable scene in which a suntanned girl sees a sailboat entering the sound, then swims towards it. The pink sand and the emerald water prefigure the color palette of the site where Antonioni later built his Summer villa, forty kilometers to the southwest. Architect Dante Bini designed a space-age house for him, shaped like a sea urchin test: a cosmic bunker with a large window as an overstretched cinemascope aperture looking towards the sea, and at the upper level a loggia facing the coast outline to the north. The villa was built in a remote site atop a bluff, hidden by the Mediterranean bush and by pink granite boulders – large rocks with a coral-like tone that appears again in the sand of the desert scenes of *Professione: reporter*, shot ten years later in southeast Algeria.

There is no written trace of an encounter between Michelangelo Antonioni and Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, the Italian millionaire publisher and guevarist revolutionary. This is quite surprising given that both men belonged to the Italian cultural élite. It is possible however that Antonioni spotted Feltrinelli’s sailboat at least once from the terrace of his villa, while musing about cinema, color and neurosis. Feltrinelli, a very good sailor, often coasted along Sardinia with his skipper on the *Eskimosa*, his 16-meter yawl – built in 1951 by Abeking & Rasmussen near Bremen – now renamed *Aleph* and moored at La Spezia. It is also possible that their gazes met, in a kind of shot-reverse-shot visual event, as Feltrinelli watched the coast pass by, thinking about the island’s subaltern condition and what needed to be done.

This is where this hypothetical short story stops. Only a couple of plot lines could ever connect the two men. One line was their draw to feminized, convoluted, modernist shapes: Antonioni’s villa, a large cavernous volume divided, fold by fold, into smaller cells. Or Feltrinelli’s two-masted yawl with four sails – like the sailboat in *Deserto rosso* – and his Citroën DS, a kind of four-wheeled nautilus. Another line was their attraction to Sardinia.

A similar pull for the island linked the two men, although for very different reasons. As Antonioni was pursuing his bourgeois modernist obsessions while gazing at the sea from his private piece of utopia, Feltrinelli was forming his vision of Sardinia as a Mediterranean Cuba. In 1967, the year Antonioni released *Blow-up*, with its plot constructed around a spectral pistol, Feltrinelli met Sardinian autonomists and tried unsuccessfully to deliver weapons to local bandits. He wanted to ignite guerrilla warfare following Che Guevara’s model, a revolution that would spread across continental Italy and would counter the threat of an authoritarian turn, a feared facsimile of the coup d’état in Greece that same year.

Four years before, Jean-Luc Godard shot *Le mépris* at Casa Malaparte in Capri, another villa set on an isolated cliff with the sea vertically below. Imagine another hypothetical encounter. Antonioni and Feltrinelli come to visit Godard on the set. They have drinks on the roof patio of the villa. The discussion gets political. Godard sides with the publisher, describing Antonioni’s and Feltrinelli’s opposing conceptions of the world – idealist and metaphysical for the former, Marxist and dialectical for the latter – with his cool sense of formula: not how things are real, but how things really are.

Tourenkreuzer m. Hilfsmotor

11 KR - 22,80 tons T.M.

Großsegel . . . 58,00 m²
 Besen . . . 9,00 "
 Vorsegel Δ . . . 31,80 "
 Verh. Fläche 97,75 "

Großsegel . . . 59,20 "
 Besen . . . 70,08 "
 Baumfackel . . . 26,80 "
 An Wind . . . 75,72 "

Fackel I . . . 32,00 "
 Sturmfackel . . . 13,88 "
 Ballen . . . 42,00 "
 Besenstange . . . 31,50 "
 Spinnaker . . . 10,50 "
 Trysegel . . . 17,20 "

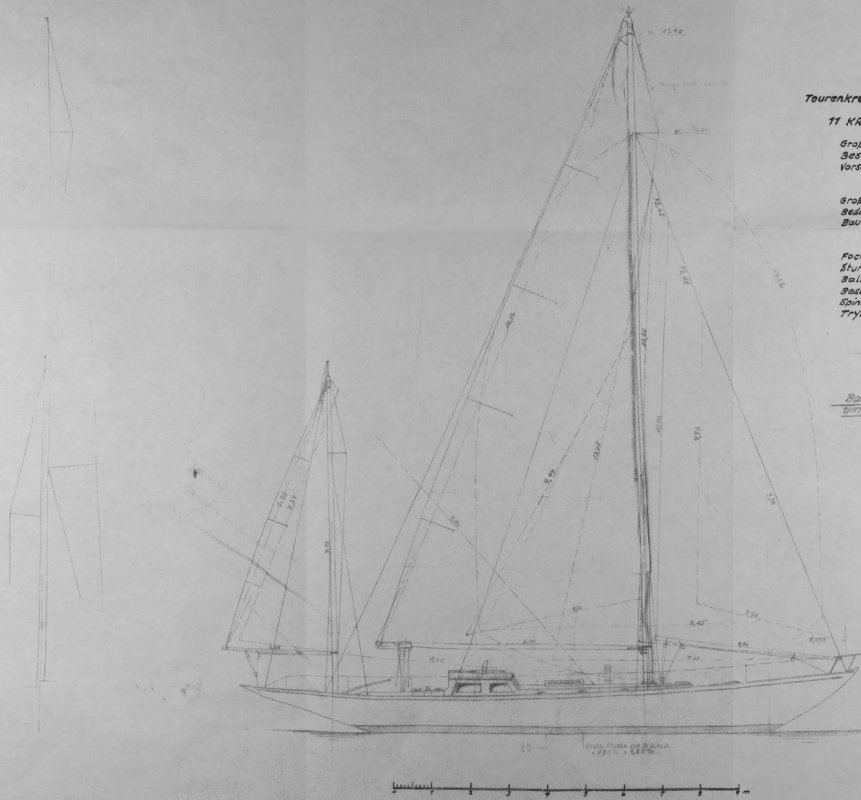
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Bau Nr 4650 Rhein
 Bauplan Nr 23170

Abeking & Rasmussen
 Yacht- u. Bootswerft
 Lemmerode i. O. Bremen

Zeichnung Nr. 20895

Dr. A. v. Engelhardt





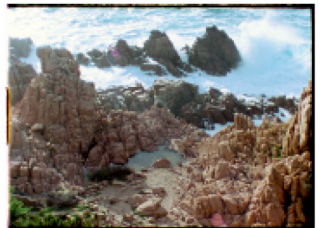
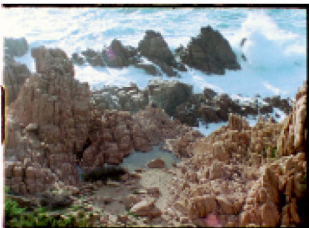
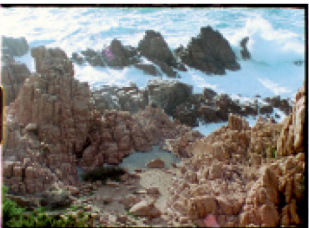
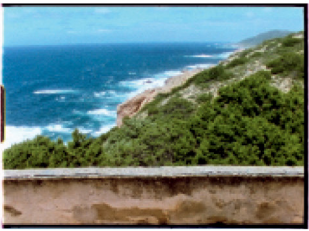


Next page: Special edition for fineartmultiple.com

Villa Antonioni

Pigment ink print, 428 x 607 mm

Edition of 25 + 5AP



Next pages: Publication

The Shell, A Visit by Eiko Grimberg, Marco Poloni and Clemens von Wedemeyer

in: Camera Austria International 129: Graz 2015

129

2015

Camera Austria

INTERNATIONAL

Emma Balkind
Tom Holert
Boris Buden
Jaleh Mansoor
Eiko Grimberg
Marco Poloni
Clemens von
Wedemeyer

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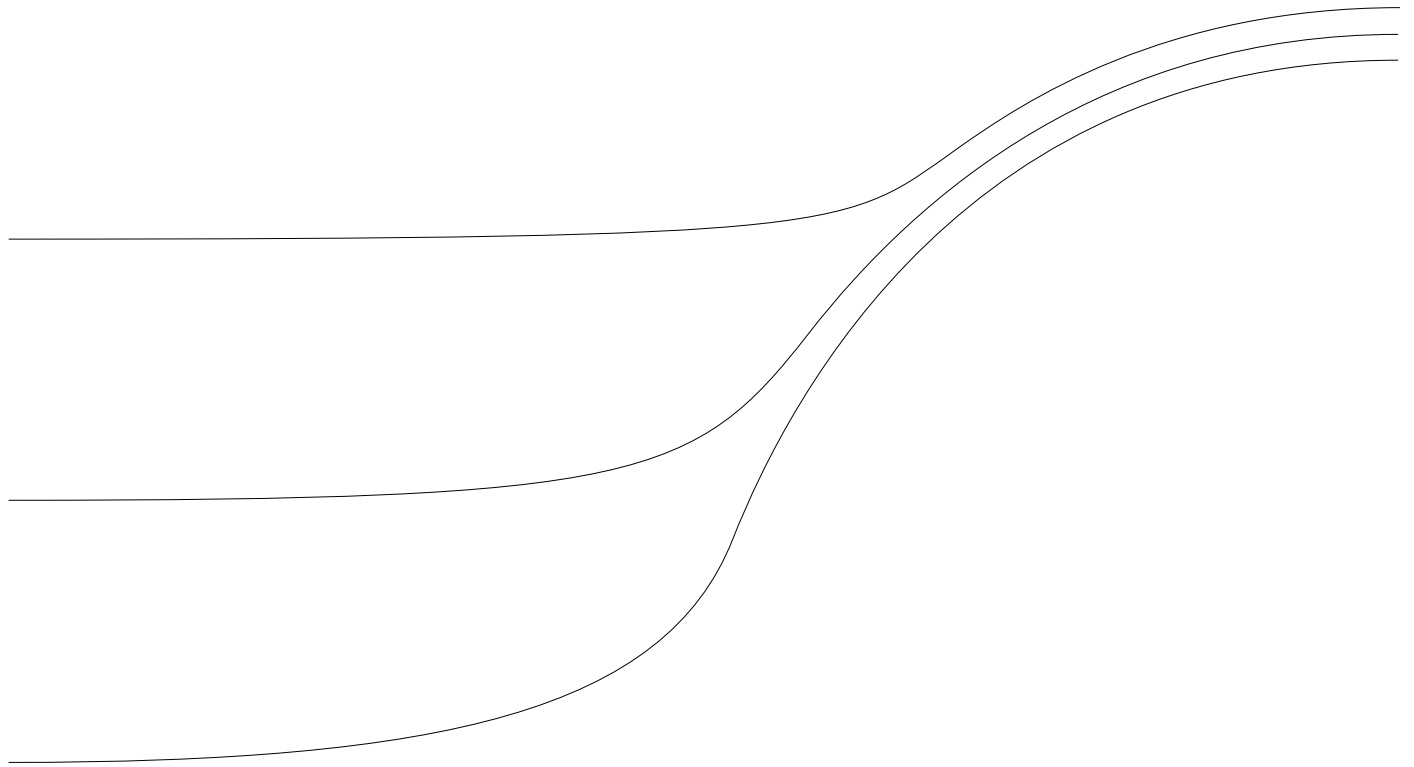
A/D/LUX

16,- €

CH

20,- sFr

A visit by **Eiko Grimberg, Marco Poloni,**
and **Clemens von Wedemeyer**



Im Juli 1979 verbringt Andrej Tarkovski einige Tage in der Villa Michelangelo Antonionis an der Nordwestküste von Sardinien. Neben der Arbeit mit Tonino Guerra am Drehbuch seines Films »Nostalgia« steht ein Kurs in Transzendentaler Meditation unter Anleitung von Enrica Fico, der Lebensgefährtin von Antonioni auf dem Programm. Tarkovski hat Frustration und Erfolg in seinem Tagebuch festgehalten: »[...] failed to notice my blue vibrations.«¹ »And again there was the blue shimmer.« Vielleicht ist dieses Flimmern ein Grund, warum er dem Gebäude selbst keine allzu große Aufmerksamkeit schenkt und sich wenig empfänglich zeigt für den architektonischen Eskapismus seines italienischen Kollegen. Sein erster Eindruck: »a bit bourgeois.«

Aufgrund eines Streiks am Flughafen muss die Reisegesellschaft die Fähre nach Olbia und von dort einen Mietwagen an die Costa Paradiso nehmen. Sie erreichen ihr Ziel spät nachts. Den folgenden Tag nehmen sie sich frei, gehen baden, und Tarkovski sinniert, ob ein Leben ohne Arbeit vorstellbar ist. Guerra verrät ihm, dass der Bau der Villa ca. 2 000 000 000 Lire, also 170 000 US-Dollar gekostet hat. Zweiter Eindruck: »Michelangelo has excessively ›good taste‹.«

Translated by Dawn Michelle d'Atri and Katrin Mundt

In July 1979, Andrej Tarkovsky spent several days at Michelangelo Antonioni's villa along the northwest coast of Sardinia. Aside from working with Tonino Guerra on the screenplay for his film "Nostalgia", the plan was to take a course in transcendental meditation guided by Enrica Fico, who was Antonioni's significant other. Tarkovsky recorded both frustration and success in his journal: "... failed to notice my blue vibrations."¹ "And again there was the blue shimmer." Perhaps this shimmering was one of the reasons he didn't pay great attention to the building itself and even seemed less receptive to the architectural escapism of his Italian associate. His first impression: "a bit bourgeois."

Due to a strike at the airport, the group of travellers had to take the ferry to Olbia and then rent a car along the Costa Paradiso. They reached their destination at night. The next day they took off to go swimming, and Tarkovsky ruminated about whether life without work is conceivable. Guerra revealed to him that building the villa had cost about 2,000,000,000 lira, which amounted to 170,000 US dollars. Second impression: "Michelangelo has excessively 'good taste'."

Antonioni had clear ideas when he commissioned Dante Bini to build the cupola. He was familiar with the “building with air” technique that had brought fame to Bini in the 1960s. Bini’s patent on blowing up reinforced concrete and allowing it to harden in this condition was state of the art—a futuristic prefabricated construction that made way for all possible utilisations. However, among those structures created with the serial and variable technique of the so-called “Binishell”, the Villa Antonioni was quite an exception to the rule. And it was meant to stay that way: with a clause in the contract, which prohibited Bini from publishing blueprints or pictures of the building, Michelangelo Antonioni and Monica Vitti (as co-owner) ensured discretion.

In order to comply with the desire of his client for an acoustic and olfactory integration of the environment, Bini decided on an upper-story balcony opening up to the sea and also on the eye carved into the cupola, which allows rain to irrigate the kidney-shaped herbary in the atrium. Since Antonioni was able to convince Bini that raw quarried granite smells different than processed granite, they had the slabs for the large stairway sanded and polished only on the upper side at the nearby stone quarry. All other edges display open fractures, with no step matching another. During his stay, Tarkovsky took several Polaroids. One shows Enrica Fico on these steps, which led from the upstairs bedrooms down to the salon, ultimately extending into the room like a catwalk. Another picture, which has the effect of a countershot, shows Andrey Tarkovsky and Tonino Guerra seated in a corner under the triangular windows. They are looking towards the stairway as if participating in a casting.

It is from a newspaper that Tarkovsky learned that his film “Stalker” had not been submitted to the competition in Venice after all. His work on the screenplay for “Nostalghia” was also proving tedious, so that he rather begrudgingly admitted that his plot idea of rendering the forlornness of the Russian soul in beautiful Italy was inadequate. He looked out across the sea and thought about Giuliana in “Il Deserto Rosso”. It is risky to follow the endless movement of waves, she says at one point in the film, because one loses interest in what happens on land.



The Large Resonator — A sea urchin test. That’s how marine biologists call the calcareous exoskeleton of sea urchins. It was the first image that came to my mind as I saw the shell of the house. As I came closer, I noticed that its coating was coarse and brittle. The outer layer was peeling off in some places, exposing the concrete and the fine steel rods that held the radial segments of the shell into place. It occurred to me that sea urchins actually exhibit an illogical shape. Since the pressure from their internal fluids compensates for the surrounding water’s pressure, why aren’t they spherical? Was there a paleontological period when they lived on land, when the force of gravity bulged them into their squashed shape, as air balloons filled with water? Did the architect of this house think of gravity’s effect on sea urchins when in the 1960s he came up with his idea of raising concrete shells with air?

I walked again around the house, meandering about a kind of liquid phase of architecture, then stopped on the northwest terrace that

Antonioni hatte klare Vorstellungen, als er Dante Bini mit dem Bau der Cupola beauftragte. Er kannte dessen Verfahren des »Building with Air«, durch das Bini in den 1960er Jahren bekannt wurde. Bini’s Patent, armierten Beton aufzublasen und in diesem Zustand aushärten zu lassen, war State of the Art, eine futuristische Fertigbauweise, die allen möglichen Nutzungen offenstand. Innerhalb des seriellen und variablen Verfahrens der sogenannten Binishells bildete die Villa Antonioni allerdings die Ausnahme der Regel. Und wollte es auch bleiben: Mit einer Klausel im Vertrag, die es Bini verbot, Pläne oder Bilder des Gebäudes zu publizieren, sicherten sich Michelangelo Antonioni und Monica Vitti als Miteigentümerin Diskretion.

Um den Wünschen seines Kunden nach akustischer wie auch olfaktorischer Integration der Umgebung nachzukommen, entschied sich Bini für einen zum Meer hin offenen Balkon im Obergeschoss und für das eingeschnittene Auge in der Kuppel, durch das der Regen den nierenförmigen Kräutergarten im Atrium bewässert. Da Antonioni Bini überzeugen konnte, dass gebrochener Granit anders riecht als bearbeiteter, ließen sie die Platten für die große Treppe im nahe gelegenen Steinbruch nur an der Oberseite schleifen und polieren. Die restlichen Kanten zeigen offene Bruchstellen, keine Stufe gleicht der anderen. Während seines Aufenthalts hat Tarkovski einige Polaroids gemacht. Eines zeigt Enrica Fico auf eben dieser Treppe, die von den Schlafräumen im Obergeschoss hinunter in den Salon führt und sich an ihrem Ende wie ein Laufsteg in den Raum hinein verlängert. Auf einer weiteren Aufnahme, die wie ein Gegen-schuss wirkt, sieht man Andrej Tarkovski und Tonino Guerra in der Sitzecke unter den dreieckigen Fenstern. Sie schauen auf die Treppe wie bei einem Casting.

Aus der Zeitung erfährt Tarkovski, dass sein Film »Stalker« wider Erwarten nicht für den Wettbewerb in Venedig eingereicht wurde. Auch die Arbeit am Drehbuch für »Nostalghia« gestaltet sich mühsam, etwas zerknirscht gesteht er sich ein, dass seine Plotidee einer Schilderung der Einsamkeit der russischen Seele im schönen Italien ungenügend ist. Er schaut auf das Meer und denkt an Giuliana in »Il Deserto Rosso«. Es sei riskant, der endlosen Bewegung der Wellen zu folgen, sagt sie an einer Stelle, man laufe Gefahr, das Interesse an den Geschehnissen an Land zu verlieren.

Der Große Resonator — Eine Seeigelschale. Meeresbiologen nennen so das kalkhaltige Exoskelett von Seeigeln. Es war das erste Bild, das mir in den Sinn kam, als ich die Kuppel des Hauses sah. Bei näherer Betrachtung bemerkte ich, dass ihre Außenhaut rau und spröde war. An einigen Stellen löste sich die Verkleidung und gab den Blick auf den Beton und die feinen Stahlarmaturen frei, die die strahlenförmig im Zentrum der Kuppel zusammenlaufenden Einzelsegmente hielten. Mir fiel auf, dass Seeigel eigentlich eine unlogische Form aufweisen. Wenn doch der Druck der Flüssigkeit in ihrem Inneren den Außendruck des Wassers ausgleicht, warum sind sie dann nicht rund? Gab es eine paläontologische Periode, in der sie an Land lebten und die Schwerkraft sie in ihre gedrungene Form wölbte, so wie Luftballons, die man mit Wasser füllt? Hatte der Architekt dieses Hauses den Effekt der Schwerkraft auf Seeigel vor





Augen, als er in den 1960er Jahren die Idee entwickelte, Betonkuppeln mit Luft zu formen?

Ich ging noch einmal um das Haus herum, durchschlenderte eine Art flüssige Phase der Architektur, und hielt dann auf der dem Meer zugewandten Nordwestterrasse inne, die über die obere Felskante ragte. Das Haus hatte zwei Öffnungen zur Terrasse hin: ein quadratisches Glasfenster, das aus seinem Rahmen gesprungen war, und ein dreiflügeliges Fenster, langgestreckt wie das eines Bunkers, dessen Form an eine überdehnte Cinemascope-Blende erinnerte. Beim Blick ins Innere kam mir noch ein anderes Bild in den Sinn: ein Schwamm. Ein Schwamm aus dem Space Age. Geschwungene Wände durchzogen den höhlenartigen Innenraum des Hauses. Er war eine komplexe, durchlässige Struktur aus Faltungen – neben- und ineinander gefalteten Falten. Ein Wirbel aus Faltungen, die einen kosmischen Schwamm bildeten.

Als nächstes ging ich durch die Nordeingangstür ins Atrium. In einer Mulde im rosa Granitfußboden war dort ein kleiner Sukkulentengarten angelegt worden. Das Licht fiel durch ein großes, rundes Loch in der Mitte des Kuppeldachs, durch das der Regen den Garten bewässern konnte. Das Loch war wie das Auge des Pantheon. Oder der Anus des Seeigels. Ein Sonnen-Anus.

Als ich noch einmal die üppigen grünen Pflanzen betrachtete, nahm ich erstmals das Geräusch des Windes im Inneren wahr. Der Maestrone, der auf der Insel vorherrschende Nordwest-Wind, wehte durch die Glastür zum Wohnzimmer bis ins Atrium und ließ sie dabei in einer tiefen Tonlage schwingen. Der Klang der Tür hallte im ganzen Haus wider. Nun hörte ich auch das Geräusch der Schwell, die sich am Felsen brach.

Eine enge, geschwungene Treppe führte zum Obergeschoss des Hauses direkt bis unter die Kuppel. Ich ging die Stufen bis zu einem weißen Zwischengeschoss hoch. Von ihm gingen drei kleine Schlafzimmer, ein Bad und eine Loggia ab, die Richtung Norden wies. Hinter einer weiteren Glastür führte die Haupttreppe aus rosa Granit wieder hinunter ins Wohnzimmer. Auch diese Tür geriet in Schwingung, allerdings in einer etwas höheren Tonlage. Es war etwa zwei Uhr nachmittags. Das Sonnenlicht, das durch das Auge der Kuppel fiel, zeichnete sich als gestrecktes Lichtoval auf einer Wand neben der Loggia ab. In diesem Moment hörte ich ein pulsierendes Geräusch, das aus einer konkaven Nische in der Wand neben meinem rechten Ohr drang. Es war ein leiser, hoher Akkord, der sich aus verschiedenen Frequenzen zusammensetzte. Ich lauschte. Dann stieg ich die Stufen hinunter und hörte die Wände des Atriums ab. Während ich mich durch den Raum bewegte, stieß ich auf weitere stationäre Klänge, die jeweils in Aspekt, Frequenz und Lautstärke variierten. Der Wind erzeugte im Inneren des Hauses eine Reihe Helmholtz'scher Resonanzen.

Als nächstes betrat ich das geräumige Wohnzimmer mit den zwei großen Fenstern. Der Wind drang durch den kaputten Rahmen des quadratischen Fensters nach innen und entwickelte in diesem höhlenartigen Raum einen mächtigen Hall. Während ich lauschte, drehte der Wind nach Norden, Richtung Tramontana, und veränderte auch die Klangeigenschaften der Resonanz. Immer noch brachen sich die Wellen am Felsen. Ihr rosa Rauschen wurde im Inneren des Saals noch verstärkt. Es war, als hätte ich die ganze Zeit über eine Nautilusmuschel am Ohr. Mir wurde klar, dass das Haus als großer Resonator konzipiert worden war, als Ort, der die eigene Wahrnehmung von Veränderungen in Wind und Wellengang intensiviert.

Spätestens jetzt verblasste die Vorstellung vom Schwamm, und an seiner Stelle nahm langsam ein treffenderes Bild Gestalt an. Ein Ohr. Ich stand inmitten eines Klangapparats. Das Wohnzimmer war das Außenohr. Die beiden Glastüren bildeten das Trommelfell, das Klangimpulse in die Höhlen der dahinterliegenden Region des Innenohrs sendete. Die Zwischenebene entsprach der Ohrtrumpete, und die rund um die Kuppel gewundenen Schlafzimmer waren Gleichgewichtsorgan und Innenohrschnecke, die den Klang in das Gehirn der Träumenden übertrugen.

faces the sea, beyond the cliff top. The house had two openings to the terrace. A square glass window that had popped off its frame and an elongated, three-paned, bunker-like window, as an overstretched cinemascope aperture. As I looked inside, another image came to my mind: a sea sponge. A sea sponge of the space age. The large cavernous volume of the house was divided by sinuous walls into smaller cells. It was a complex, porous structure made of folds. Fold by fold, fold into fold. A vortex of coils that formed a cosmic sponge.

Next I walked through the north entrance into the atrium. There, in a cavity in the pink granite floor, lay a small garden of succulent plants. The space was lit by a large circular hole in the center of the dome through which rain could irrigate the garden. The opening was like the oculus of the Pantheon. Or the anus of a sea urchin. A solar anus.

As I looked again at the lush green plants, I started to perceive the sound of the wind inside. The Maestrone, the northwesterly wind that dominates the island, was blowing into the atrium through the glass door to the living room, making it vibrate at a low pitch. In turn, the sound produced by the door reverberated throughout the house. Now I could also hear the sound of the swell surging against the cliff.

A narrow twisting staircase led to the higher level of the house, directly under the cupola. I walked up the stairs to a white mezzanine. It was connected to three small bedrooms, a bathroom, and a loggia facing north. There was another glass door behind which the main staircase, carved from pink granite, led down into the living room. This door was vibrating too, at slightly higher pitch. It was about two in the afternoon. The sunlight entering through the dome's eye produced a slightly elongated disc of light on a wall next to the loggia. At that moment I heard a pulsating sound that came from a concave recess of the wall next to my right ear. It was a low-intensity, high-pitch chord composed of different frequencies. I listened. Then I walked downstairs and scanned the walls of the atrium. Moving around I detected other stationary sounds, varying in aspect, frequency, and intensity. The wind had the effect of inducing a number of Helmholtz resonances inside the house.

Next I entered the large living room with the two big windowpanes. The wind leaked inside through the broken frame of the square glass window and reverberated powerfully inside the cave-like space. As I listened, the wind turned north, to Tramontana, changing the aspect of the resonance. The waves were still breaking against the cliff, their pink noise amplified inside the hall. It was like walking with a nautilus shell against one's ear. It became clear to me that the house had been conceived as a large resonator, as a site to heighten one's perception of the changes in swell and wind.

By now the image of the sponge had blurred and morphed into a more accurate image: an ear. I was standing at the center of a sound apparatus. The living room was the outer chamber. The two glass doors acted as eardrums, sending sonic pulses to the cavities of the inner ear region located behind them. The mezzanine acted as the auditory tube and the bedrooms, curled up under the dome, as the vestibular and cochlear organs where sound was processed to the brains of the dreamers.









Ein wiedergefundener Knochen — Ich gehe um das Kuppelhaus herum, und vor mir breitet sich das Mittelmeer aus. Es liegt vielleicht 50 Meter unterhalb der Terrasse. Die Sonne steht tief, das Meer wirkt gebogen, als könne man die Erdkrümmung sehen. Eine große Leere. Als ich mich zum Haus wende, wird mir seine Form bewusst: eine Kugel, zur Hälfte eingegraben in die Oberfläche eines runden Planeten.

Das Besondere an diesem Haus ist nicht nur seine Form, sondern auch seine Lage auf einer Insel. Es ist am Rand der Siedlung das letzte Haus vor dem Kliff. Diese Situation produziert in den BesucherInnen auf einfachste Weise das Gefühl abgeschieden zu sein. Aber hier wird auch angedeutet, dass man ganz alleine sein könnte, dass es Plätze gibt, an denen man völlig auf sich zurückgeworfen ist. Wenn man in die kalifornische Wüste gerät, gibt es sofort ein Gefühl der Weite, und die Land-Art hatte sie für sich als Inspiration entdeckt. Aber die Mojave-Wüste hat eher eine skulpturale Qualität. Hier an der sardischen Küste ist es ein filmischer Blick mit Sogwirkung, der einen hin zum Meer und nach unten zieht: in die Strudel, die zwischen den roten Felsen tief unten schäumen und alle Formen annehmen können. Es ist das Meer, das die zielgerichteten Gedanken zerstäubt, um sie diffus zurück zu spucken.

Mir kommt Andrej Tarkovskis Film »Solaris« in den Sinn und die Raumstation, in der ein Kosmonaut über den Ozeanplaneten fliegt und aus dem runden Fenster schaut: Der Planet, seine Strömungen sind in ständiger Bewegung, sie scheinen die menschlichen Gedanken zu absorbieren und zu ändern. Während der Kosmonaut denkt, dass er den Planeten studiert, untersucht dieser ihn und ändert seine Realität. Der lebende Ozean macht dem Kosmonauten zunächst Angst, aber erfüllt ihm später seine Träume.

Sieben Jahre nach »Solaris« stand Tarkovski hier auf der Terrasse, als er nostalgisch in sein Tagebuch notiert:

»The villa stands above the sea, with the sea all around it. Tamarisk, thuja, shrubs, cliffs — granite. The beach is amazing. Weathered cliffs. The granite has taken on astonishing shapes. Silence. Sunshine. The sea is azure. It's a fairy-tale place. Heaven. Paradiso. Only where are my Tyapochka and Larissa!«

Die Tatsache, dass Tarkovski am nächsten Tag mit Antonioni durch ein Teleskop den Mond betrachtet hat, wirkt heute zwingend. Die Möglichkeit eines solchen Treffens ist ablesbar in der Planung des Gebäudes, das für mich wie aus dem Solaris ausgeschnitten scheint. Das Haus und seine Position in der Isolation ist die Mischung eines Modernismus mit Naturmythen, gebaut wie eine sich berührende Ästhetik der beiden Regisseure. Man kann sich fragen, warum nicht Tarkovski schon zehn Jahre früher hier war und dieses Haus gesehen hatte, als es kurz vor dem Dreh von »Solaris« gebaut worden war. Die späte Einladung von Antonioni an Tarkovski wäre somit eine Erfüllung dieser Idee.

Seit dem Bau des Hauses sind fast 50 Jahre vergangen, und die Zeit hat ihre Spuren hinterlassen. 1969 war dies Science-Fiction-Architektur. Es war die Epoche, in der weltweit große gestalterische Würfe versucht wurden, anschaulich an dem Bild des Affen, der am Beginn von »2001 – Odyssee im Weltraum« einen Knochen in die Luft wirft und dieser im bekanntesten Match Cut der Filmgeschichte zu einem Raumschiff wird.

Nun ist die Villa immer noch da, eine zur Zeit unbewohnte Hülle, die verwittert ihr Wesen als Skelett zeigt, übrig gelassen aus einer fantastischen Zeit. Ein Bild kommt mir in den Kopf: Was ist eigentlich mit dem Knochen passiert, der 1968 in den Himmel geworfen und im Schnitt zum Raumschiff wurde? Der Film schneidet es so, als ob er nie wieder auf dem Boden landen würde. Tatsächlich muss der Knochen aber, der Gravitation wegen, wieder hinunterfallen. Er ist hier heruntergefallen. Dieses Haus ist der vom Himmel gefallene Knochen. Post-Science-Fiction.

¹ Alle im Text verwendeten Zitate von Tarkovski sind aus der englischen Übersetzung seiner Tagebücher. Andrej Tarkovsky: *Time Within Time, The Diaries 1970–1986*, übers. v. Kitty Hunter-Blair, London/Boston: Faber & Faber 1994.

A Recovered Bone — I walk around the domed house, the Mediterranean spread before me. It rests about fifty meters below the terrace. The sun is low in the sky and the sea appears curved, as if one could see the curvature of the earth. A vast emptiness. Upon turning towards the house, I notice its form: a sphere, half buried in the surface of a round planet.

Special about this house is not just its form, but also its position on an island. It is the last home before the cliff at the edge of a settlement. In the simplest way, this situation elicits within the visitor a sense of being secluded. Suggested here is also the idea that one might be utterly alone, that places exist where one is fully self-reliant. If one happens to enter the California desert, it immediately conveys a feeling of vastness, and Land Art has found inspiration there. But the Mojave Desert has more of a sculptural quality. Here along the Sardinian coast it is a filmic view with a suction effect that pulls one down towards the sea: into the maelstroms that foam deep down between the red cliffs and can embrace all forms. It is the sea that nebulises any targeted thoughts, only to diffusely spit them back out.

Andrey Tarkovsky's film "Solaris" crosses my mind, and the space station where a cosmonaut flies across the oceanic planet, starting out of the round window. The planet and its currents are in constant motion; they seem to absorb and alter human thought. While the cosmonaut thinks that he is studying the planet, it is actually influencing him instead, shifting his reality. The cosmonaut is initially frightened by the animate ocean, but it later fulfils his dreams.

Seven years after "Solaris", Tarkovsky stood here on this very terrace, nostalgically writing the following in his journal:

"The villa stands above the sea, with the sea all around it. Tamarisk, thuja, shrubs, cliffs — granite. The beach is amazing. Weathered cliffs. The granite has taken on astonishing shapes. Silence. Sunshine. The sea is azure. It's a fairy-tale place. Heaven. Paradiso. Only where are my Tyapochka and Larissa!"

Today, the fact that Tarkovsky, together with Antonioni, viewed the moon with a telescope the very next day is quite compelling. The possibility of such an encounter is discernible in the planning of the building, which, to me, seems as if it were extracted from "Solaris". The building and its position of isolation is a blend of a modernism combined with nature myths, constructed like a tangential aesthetics of the two directors. One might wonder why Tarkovsky had not come here ten years earlier to see the house before he shot his film.

Almost fifty years have passed since the house was built, and traces of time have been left behind. In 1969 this was science-fiction architecture. It was the epoch where grand gestures of design were drafted worldwide, made evident in the picture of the ape who, at the beginning of "2001: A Space Odyssey", threw a bone into the air, only to see it turn into a spaceship in the most famous match cut in the history of film.

Now the villa is still there, presently as an uninhabited, weather-beaten shell that shows its essence as a skeleton, left over from a mythical era. An image comes to my mind: What ever happened to the bone that was thrown up towards the sky and edited into a spaceship in 1968? The film is cut in such a way that it appears to never again touch the ground. In actuality, though, the bone must give in to gravity and plummet back down. It landed here. This house is the bone fallen from the sky. Post-science fiction.

¹ All Tarkovsky texts have been excerpted from the English translation of his journals: Andrej Tarkovsky, *Time Within Time: The Diaries 1970–1986*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair (London and Boston: Faber & Faber, 1994).







Previous page:

Case Study #06: Shot Up Street Signs (Objets troués), 2016

Found street signs: 11 elements

Cactus Study #02: V-like

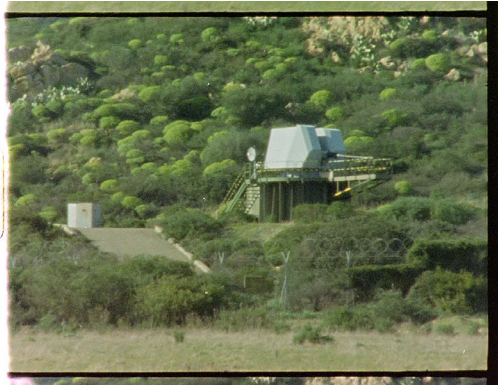
Cactus (*Opuntia Ficus-Indica*) with bullet perforations

Case Study #05: Scouting Locations for Una Cuba mediterranea: Poligono Interforze di Salto di Quirra (PISQ), 2016

Scouting Locations for Una Cuba mediterranea: Poligono Interforze di Salto di Quirra (PISQ) are roughly edited filmic notes from a journey at the restricted weapons testing range and rocket launching site of Salto di Quirra on the southeast coast of Sardinia. PISQ is the largest military range in Italy. It is regularly rented by the Italian Ministry of Defence to NATO members, who use it to test ballistic missiles and experimental weapons. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) also used it in the past. Abnormal rates of cancers of the hemolymphatic system have been reported in neighbouring populations, as well as natal genetic malformation amongst lamb in nearby pastures. Radioactive pollution from depleted uranium weapons is among possible causes.

Continuous film projection installation, Super-8 mm film on HD video, 1:1.33, colour, silent, dimensions variable, loop of 7 min 19 sec







Cactus study #01: COIDADU

Cactus (Opuntia Indica)