

THE TIME OF THE FLOOD

Stefano Cagol

Extracts of 60-seconds each from the 7 video works in the series.

The Time of the Flood, Fragments, 8'38"

HD Video, 2020 – 2021

Original total running time 40'

“The Time of the Flood” by Stefano Cagol reflects on our relationship with nature, the imminent danger and the flood as the summa of all the upheavals – it started in November 2019 and became prophetic of the current state of affairs.

Fathom – 06:50

The endoscope on the seabed recalls the need to go deep into things, to understand what we cannot see despite it being already in front of our eyes. The water evokes the sea level rise, the melting of the eternal ice – “the flood” – becoming a synthesis of our unbalanced relationship with nature. Once again, the artist employs a technical device in order to give a sign, this time from Nordhafen, an inner harbor of a canal of the river Spree. Here, in the center of Berlin, metropolitan waters “show” themselves in all their suffering.

Antagonismus – 06:50

Water and fire, opposite elements par excellence, are chosen by the artist to trigger a more complex reading of antagonism. Usually, water extinguishes fire; however, in this action we witness fire “attacking” water. In ecology, antagonism indicates a direct action of one element against the other and aware of such indication, the artist cannot help but seeing man and nature in irresolvable opposition to each other. Set in Flughafensee, a lake near the Tegel Airport in Berlin, this action – a flame created by the combination of a lighter and a hairspray can – echoes a former action, from ten years go, in which the artist set fire on the Arctic.

Just Before – 10:45

In an undeniably urban environment, the artist spreads a warning of imminent danger, he gives an audible alarm; in a sort of shamanic ritual, the artist turns on an analogue siren, which becomes the tool that exorcises and simultaneously underlines what is about to happen. On the background, three recognizable buildings of Berlin: the Fernsehturm, the contemporary architecture of the new Europacity Quartier and, finally, the Reichstag.

Signal to the Future - 03:00

At dawn, the artist launches an SOS sign, warning about his presence, an attempt to communicate, to illuminate the darkness – a symbolic and universal action that spurs reflections on the present we are living in, between hope, sense of danger and anthropogenic interference. The site of this action is the iconic Piazza del Duomo in Bressanone (Italy), in a deserted state, during the pandemic. The images documenting this action have been broadcasted by several international media outlets, reaching over 400 million viewers.

Abiogenesis - 03:25

The artist looks down from the edge of an ancient volcanic precipice that sinks into the darkest bowels of the earth; he dangerously approaches a caldera – which is a large cauldron-like hollow that forms shortly after the emptying of a magma reservoir in a volcanic eruption – covered by a puddle of dense whitish water, continuously bubbling and expelling gasses that rise from a depth of over 2,000 meters. In an attempt to penetrate alone the volcanic area of Manziana (Italy) – a few kilometers from Lake Bracciano – that was active between 500,000 and 40,000 years ago, the artist ruminates on abiogenesis, which traces the birth of life back to non-living matter.

The Contemplation & the Misunderstanding - 4:58

The action in the video evokes the innermost layers of the Earth, its most primordial origins, prompts new visions for the future. The artist approaches an ancient volcanic area of tens of millions of years ago, passes through the vapours that rise at high temperature from the rocks, either very dark or very white, until he clutches fragile sulphur crystals in his hands, a mineral essential for living beings, which appears in all its preciousness. In the meantime, he makes the explored territory his own, marking it with luminous indicators. Minimal gestures become a metaphor for the position of humanity toward nature. The sound is an elaboration of sounds from nature and the Earth's electromagnetic field.

Gezeitenkraft - 04:20

In this action, the artist delves into the balance between humankind and nature. Many factors come into play: sea level, winds, exploitation, pollution, and energy sources. While they manifest themselves, in an intense and yet not explosive manner, the artist approaches them, tries to go into them, contemplating their transformative nature at a geological and geopolitical crossroad: the Wadden Sea (Denmark / Germany / The Netherlands) a liminal



area of tides between wetlands and human interventions that aimed at “taming” the waters.

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