

Press Release

FILIPPO BERTA ***Common People***

Texts by Giorgia Calò and Raffaella Frascarelli
September 15 - October 20, 2021

Preview Tuesday 14 September h 6.00-9.00 (confirmation appreciated)

Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani
Via Ventura 6, 20134 Milan (Space 1) ITALY

On September 14, 2021, at the headquarters of Prometeo Gallery Ida Pisani in via Ventura 6, Milan (ITALY), *Common People* will open, a solo exhibition by Filippo Berta (Treviglio, 1977) which focuses his research on how social and individual tensions can produce different forms of boundaries and dualisms. Therefore the artist could not exempt from asking himself about the phenomenon of physical walls - a geopolitical leitmotiv of the 21st century -, a spectrum that has grown thirty years after the fall of the Berlin wall, to the point of counting more than 70 lines of impassable demarcation in the world.

Winner with the *ONE BY ONE* project (curated by Giorgio Calò and Francesca Ceccherini) of the 5th edition / 2019 of the Italian Council, program for the international promotion of Italian art of the General Direction for Contemporary Creativity of the Ministry of Culture and in partnership with Nomas Foundation, Sapienza University of Rome and Tools for Culture, Filippo Berta will exhibit in the spaces of Prometeo Gallery the last executive phases of a research started in 2016 in the Balkan area.

“The title of this exhibition, which takes its inspiration from the *ONE BY ONE* project -Giorgia Calò writes in her text- is *Common People*. A title as simple as it is explanatory because all of Filippo's work speaks "only" and exclusively of people, placing man in a condition of relationship with himself and with the society of which he belongs “.

Starting from the surprising fact that more than thirty years after the fall of the Berlin wall, the divisions built by man to confine peoples have multiplied exponentially, reaching over 70 in the world, the artist, between 2019 and 2020, crossed Eastern Europe (Hungary, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Turkey, North Macedonia, Greece, Bulgaria), to arrive in America (United States and Mexico), and finally in Asia (South Korea), shooting videos and participatory actions with the involvement of the inhabitants of the border areas, asking them to count out loud, and in their own language, the thorns that make up the fencing wires. A ritual action that is carried out through the gestures of the hands in the act of indicating each single thorn and the sound of the voice that recites the count as in an intimate prayer. The action, replicated on eight state borders in which hundreds of kilometers of walls interrupt the earth, denounces the search for an impossible result: the inability to glimpse an end, an endlessly repeated utopian count that expands between

space and time, between past and future, not letting us foresee the end of this phenomenon.

“Challenging the further isolations of the global pandemic -writes Raffaella Frascarelli- , from 2019 the artist has spent almost two years traveling through human and natural landscapes in which the language of art has been able to awaken individual and collective agency. Involved into a performance that has incorporated the geopolitical borders, the *common people* have been able to poetically and symbolically dissolve those boundaries”.

On display, in addition to the photographic works created in the last two years, some drawings and a room dedicated to a video artwork in which the voices -and the different languages- of the common people who live those situations overlap in a climax. Finally, Filippo Berta constructs a sculpture that is formalized in the symbol of infinity created through *concertina*, the barbed wire of industrial production composed of extremely sharp trapezoidal thorns that the artist has found as a linear plot on every border he has reached during the course of the its production.

Filippo Berta was born in Treviglio in 1977. In 2015 he won the MIA Foundation Award in Bergamo; in 2014 the Maretti Prize, La Habana (Cuba), and was a finalist at the Talent Prize in Rome. In 2008 he was among the winners of the International Performance Award, Galleria Civica di Trento. He has exhibited at the MADRE Museum in Naples, MSU-Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, Museion in Bolzano, MART - Galleria Civica di Trento, Jonkopings Lans Museum, Staedtischegalerie in Bremen, State Museum of Contemporary Art in Thessaloniki, Pori Museum, Victoria Art Center of Bucharest, Center for Cultural Decontamination, CZKD, Belgrade, Matadero Contemporary Creative Center in Madrid, MAO-Museum of Architecture and Design of Slovenia. He has participated in the Thessaloniki Biennial (2013; 2017), the Curitiba Biennial (2017), the Prague Biennial (2011) and the Moscow Biennial-Young Art (2012). He has taken part in residencies for artists, including the Ratti Foundation in Como and the Spinola Banna Foundation in Poirino. He has taken part in festivals such as: Sarajevo International Festival (2014, 30th edition), International Konst Film (2013, Sweden), Corpus 3 (2012, Naples), Romaeuropa Festival (2012, Rome), Tulca-After the fall (2011 , Galway, IR), European Performance Art Festival (2011, Warsaw, PL). Some works of the ONE BY ONE cycle have become part of the collection of the GAMEc of Bergamo.

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