



Filippo Bisagni

portfolio

# Artist's statement

I usually introduce myself and my practice reflecting on a quote from a Charles Baudelaire's poetry: 'Au fond de l'inconnue pour trouver du nouveau.' (In the depths of the unknown so as to discover something new). Baudelaire opens up a chasm which immediately brings us under a sword of Damocles: do artists have to create a "newness"? I do not want to say or create something new specifically. My obsession is more to produce something which is sincerely mine.

I conceive the "language of art" as a preferential medium to penetrate the most personal and intimate dimension of life, to discover the denial of the identity that we are supposed to have, a denial achieved by psychological and mediatic influences, that impose domineering models.

I conceive images as something alive. My interest is to inquire into the future of images in a society where they have never been so powerful but meanwhile also so precarious. I try to show how an image suffers being forced to live inside a medium and how the same image tries to commit a sort of "medial suicide", since it feels that the medium is killing itself.

My practice consists in destroying an image with a slow and meticulous operation of "aseptic consumption", realizing what it wants to do potentially. This way is possible to be in front of the deep soul of images and to reveal their real nature and identity, which is the first step to care about images' future.

Filippo Bisagni



This work - and the others of the series - is part of a bigger project which includes some videos presented in this portfolio too. Every picture is the result of an operation that consists of removing the substance an image is made of, as it was bleeding flash. The aim is to show how an image “suffers” being in contact with the contemporary mediatic context, but also an effort to reveal images’ real nature and identity.

**PORTRAIT OF AN IMAGE:  
ROMY SCHNEIDER**

Digital photographic print  
Variable dimensions  
2014



**PORTRAIT OF AN IMAGE:  
JESUS CHRIST**

Digital photographic print  
Variable dimensions  
2014



**PORTRAIT OF AN IMAGE:  
GRACE KELLY**

Digital photographic print  
Variable dimensions  
2014



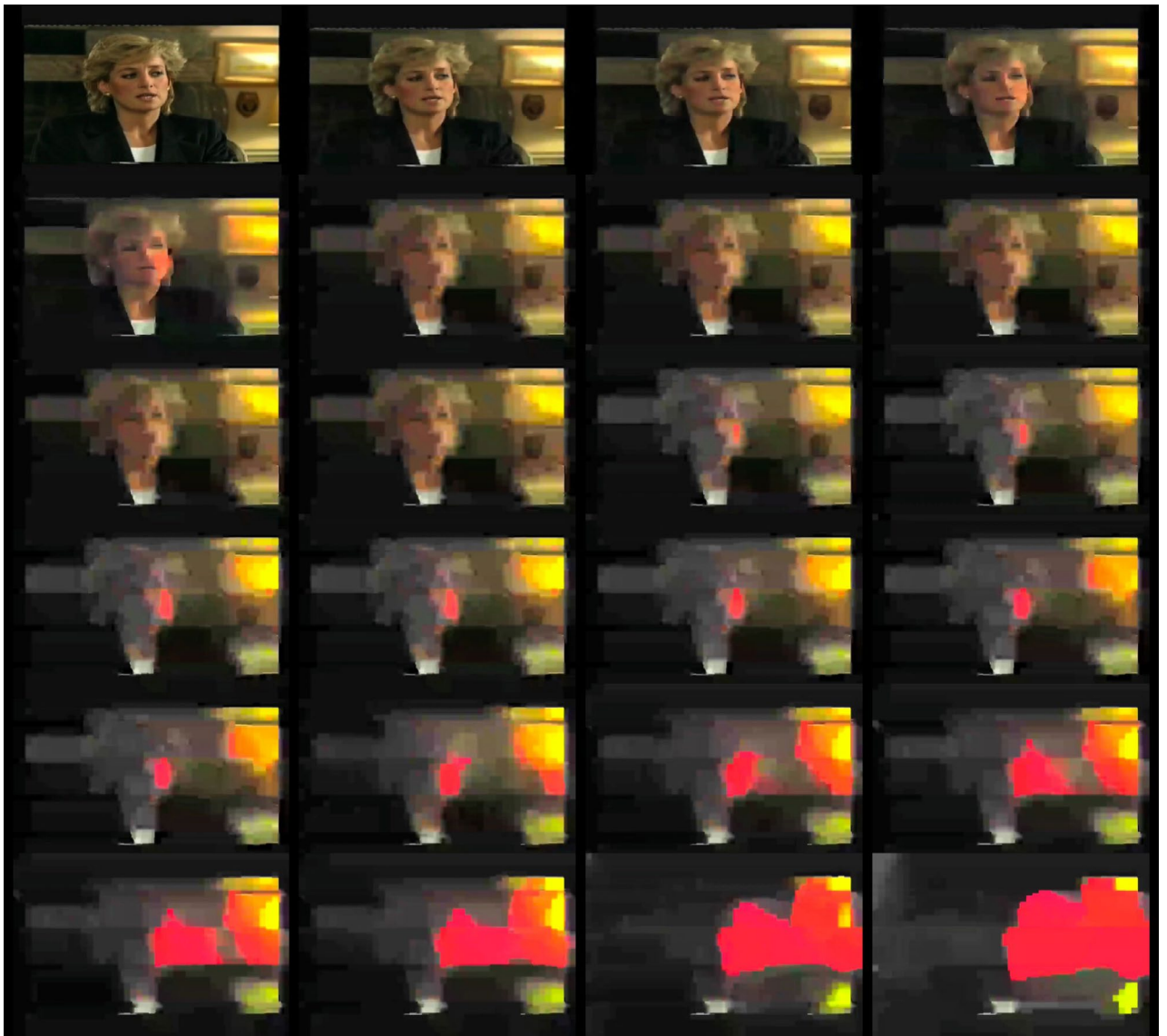
In this video the super model Linda Evangelista is called to embody the Image par excellence since, during the act of being prepared to be showed, she is saying: "I'm difficult! Ok?!". The action is obsessively repeated, while the quality of the image is getting worse and worse, until every feature of the original image is unrecognizable. The clip is repeated 24 times as the 24 frames per second of the cinema technique, but it is also a reference to the 204 code of the http language that means "no content". This way the image deteriorates through a slow, obsessive process of "aseptic consumption" - the virtual substance of the image is slowly tortured as flesh. This video is part of a series which intends to reflect on the destiny of the images in the current media context, where they are repeated in low quality and in a redundant way. This kind of work underline the oxymoron of a practice performed by a lot of media: showing an image in a bad quality, they destroy this image in the act of conveying it; but after all it is also an opening to a new life: a shapeless and indefinite chromatism, in which the spectator is demanded to create a new image.

## IMAGE - MAKING

Video 1'28"  
2014

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/melfb4sbgcdwzww/4%20IMAGE%20-%20MAKING.mov?dl=0>



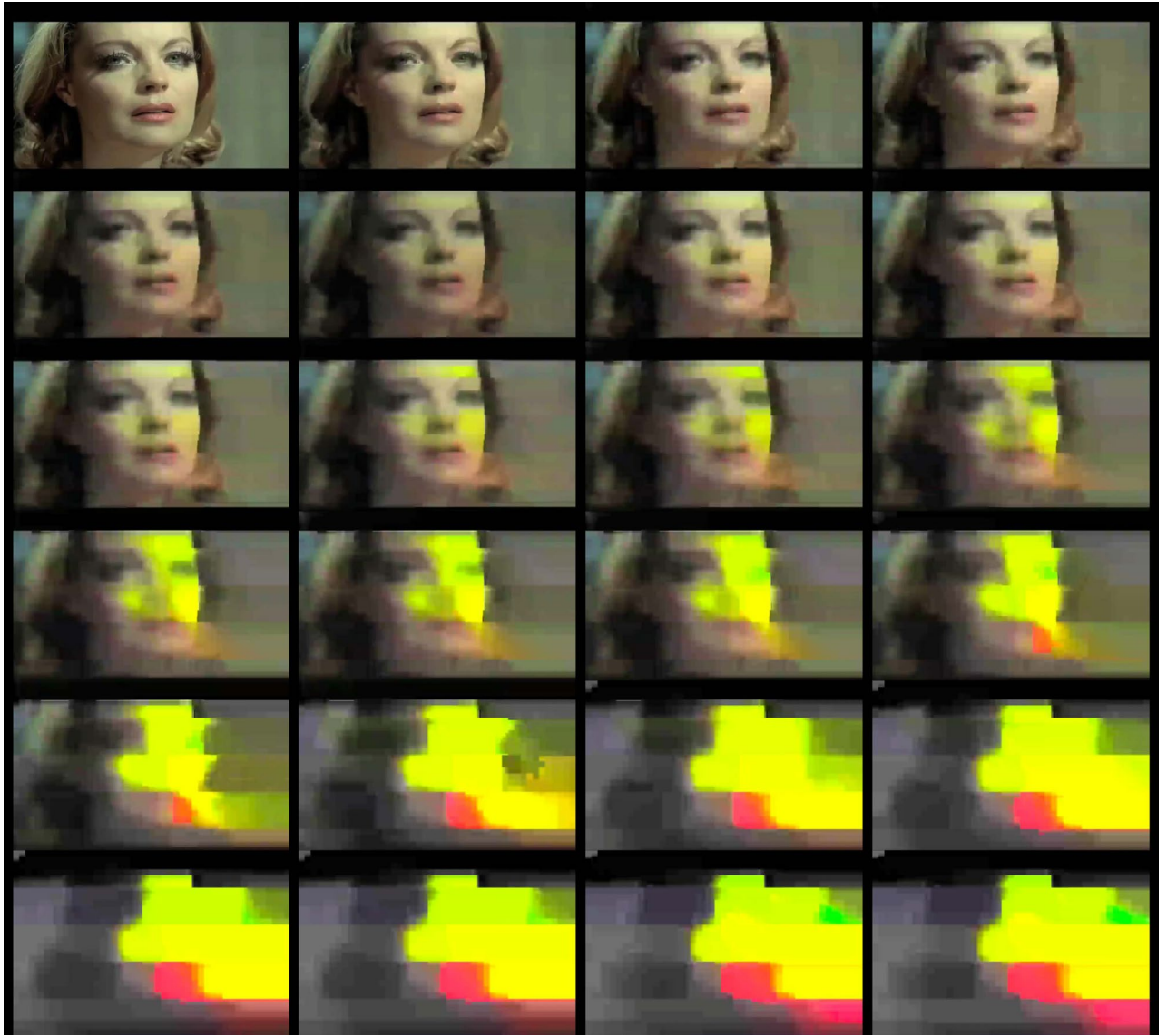


In this video Princess Diana repeats paradoxically “Encourage the media!”. This clip is taken from the most popular interview released by this emblematic figure, which was the most photographed woman in the world, and also lost her life during an extreme attempt to reproduce her image.

## LADY DIE

Video 1'47"  
2013

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/hf-ck8ne8ihg6r20/2%20LADY%20DIE%20.mov>



The actress Romy Schneider here looks into the camera while, hiding her face, she asks not to be photographed. The title, which is the literal translation of what she is saying, underlines the double meaning of taking a picture and killing an image.

**DON'T SHOOT ME,  
PLEASE!**

Video 5'21"  
2013

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/qcpgw-mol9j9a5fv/1%20DON%27T%20SHOOT%20ME!.mov>





Video installation at *Fondazione Biagiotti* - Firenze



Video installation at *Viafarini Docva* - Milan



A friend of mine showed me a picture of her grandparents in a “Shooting Gallery”. In Europe, after World War I, an attraction appeared on fairgrounds and remained popular until the Seventies: the “Photographic Shooting Gallery”. Anytime the bullet hit the centre of the target, it activated the camera’s shutter so that the successful player was awarded a portrait of himself shooting. My friend’s grandparents along with Simone De Beauvoir and Jean Paul Sartre, Lee Miller and Marcel Duchamp are participating in this work as a reflection embodied by a woman who became a sort of muse for me: Romy Schneider. She was an Austrian actress very popular in Continental Europe during the Sixties and Seventies, who played twice in her career the role of Elisabeth Empress of Austria - a very contradicting figure who, despite being one of most popular woman of her Empire, spent half of her life in mourning dress, hiding her face with a veil. Elisabeth is here surprised by a camera lens, completely hiding her face with a fan, as she suffered of ‘glance fear’.

## SHOOTING GALLERY

Collage  
42 x 29,7 cm  
2014





I asked the same friend from the previous work, to shoot a gun at a picture of Romy Schneider - a screen shot of a YouTube video. I want to reflect on media images and popular icons. These are images that run the risk of being killed by violent acts resulting from being popularized by the media or by a glance, otherwise from a real gun shot, like the shooting of Dorothy Podber at Andy Warhol's Factory in 1964. She had asked permission to 'shoot' the paintings, thanks to the double meaning of the English verb 'to shoot', then drew her gun, and fired in the middle of Marilyn's eyes.

### **SHOT PIC**

Digital photographic print  
42 x 25 cm  
2014



A small “screen” translucent and transparent, that encloses and shuts the iconic image of an actress. This image is crystallized in its dissolution: nothing remains but the phantom of a face eternally blocked in a suspension between the act of hiding and defending itself, and the attempt to break the screen to whom it is prisoner. The Italian word “schermo” in the title refers both to the meaning of screen, and also to protection and safeguard.

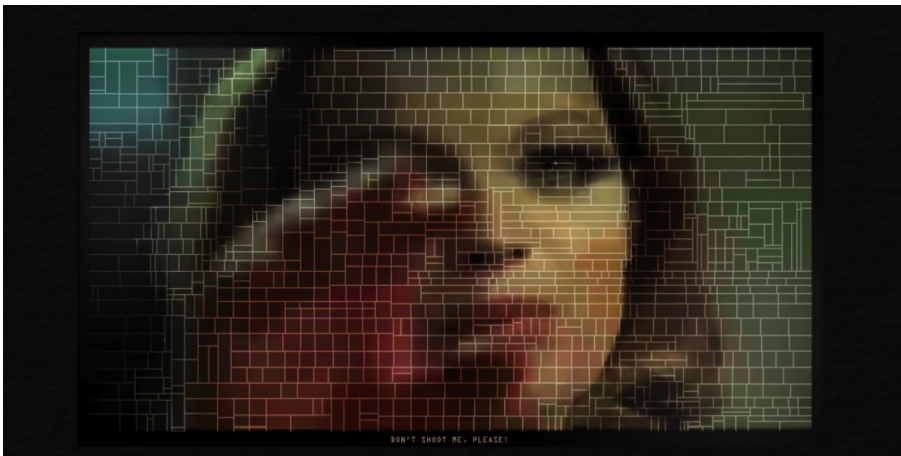
### **SCHERMO (SCREEN)**

Digital photographic print on acetate sheets, cardboard

80 x 80 cm

2013







In 1968 Warhol stated that in the future everyone would be world-famous for 15 minutes. Today those 15 minutes of fame are felt as an imposition. Steven Assanti is an example of a guy with lots of social problems because of his obesity disease. Forced to stay at home spending his time in front of a computer screen, he created a character on YouTube named Fatboygetdown. This way he tries to bring the attention of any kind of audience arousing together both disgust and tenderness. In this work Fatboygetdown, with his effort to become popular, is seen as a victim who sacrifices himself within the desperate effort to take part in a main system: a queer-consumistic and mediatic world where divinities are some immortal icons, and saints are pop singers. I have taken three of his videos and I have compared them to other videos found on YouTube too, creating a tripartite structure.

#1

In the first chapter an image of a wild-eyed Marilyn Monroe introduces Fatboy. While he lip-syncs a song of the pop singer Katy Perry, it is shown a YouTube's make up tutorial where a girl is slowly transforming herself in a Marilyn's fake. The chapter concludes with Katy Perry herself dressed and made up as Marilyn Monroe, and imitating her most famous pose.

#2

The second chapter is conceived as a fake of the videoclip of *Last Friday Night* by Katy Perry, where the pop singer plays the role of a geek girl reproducing the same way of speaking and also gestures and posture. Fatboy in his video expresses his excitement for having a lot of fans on YouTube. I created a sort of "dialogue" between Fatboy and the character played by Katy Perry. In the conclusion I placed the comments of Fatboy's video on YouTube instead of the original videoclip's end titles, using *Beautiful* by Christina Aguilera as soundtrack, since Fatboy is singing it at the end of his video.

#3

The third chapter begins with Christina Aguilera performing *Diamonds are a girl's best friends*, which introduces Fatboy singing another Marilyn's song (*I wanna be loved by you*) and having her picture in the background; at the same time I personally take part as performer lip-syncing the same song. The video ends with Marilyn Monroe turning her back to a paparazzi's camera.

## 15 MINUTES VICTIMS - TRIPTYCH

Video

(3'43")

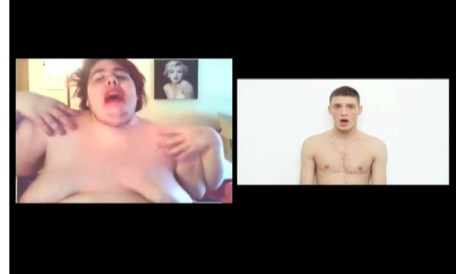
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/nnqht-74ndn6z3t/%231.mov>

(9'04")

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/t52dekuf-t93hi1z/%232.mov>

(3'33")

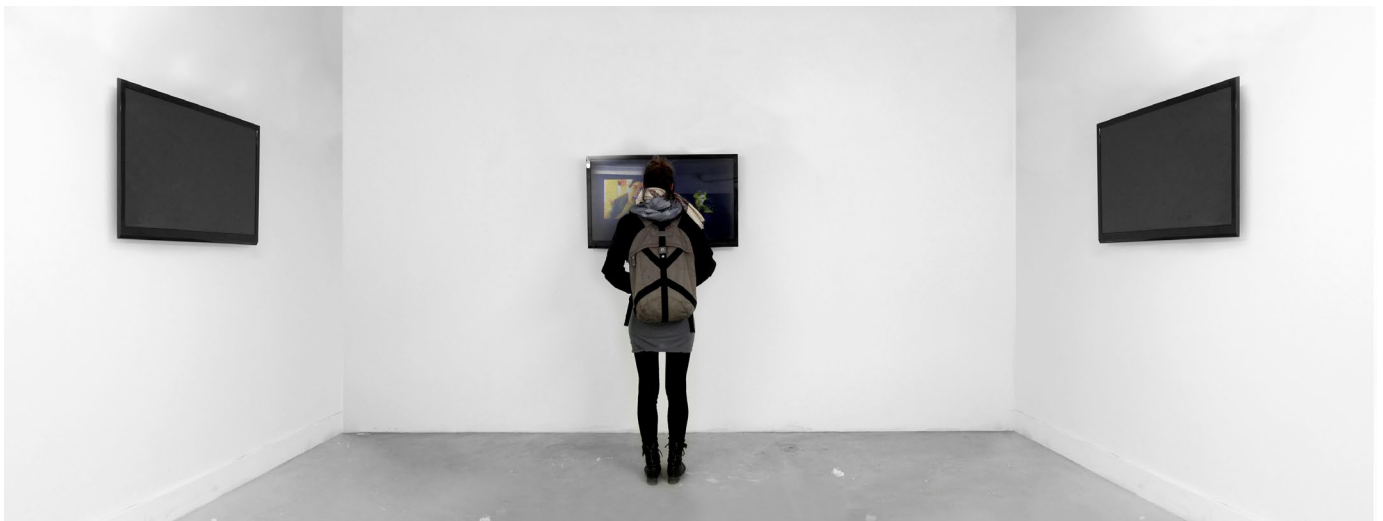
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/htm4u-w65efnp4eu/%233.mov>



#1

#2

#3



Video installation at *Lamorva House* - Falmouth





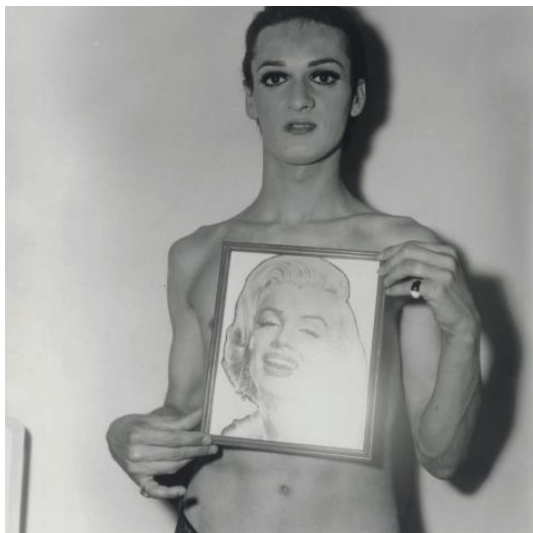
I selected one of Fatboy's videos (644.527 views) in which he makes a sort of parody of the song *Hold it against me* by Britney Spears, adapting its text in an autobiographical way. In the performance I related my body to the image of Fatbogetdown largely projected on a wall: I lip-sync his song, standing in front of him. At the same time, on a monitor placed behind me, scrolled the comments of YouTube users.

#### **15 MINUTES' VICTIMS - PERFORMANCE**



Performance at *Viafarini Docva - Spazio AiEP*, Milan

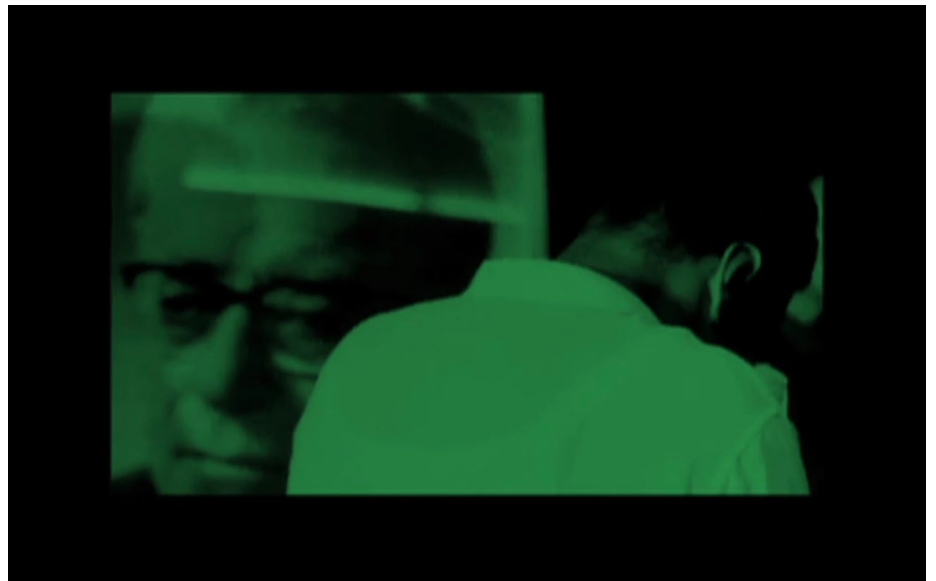




I discovered a thematic and compositional coincidence between Fatboygetdown's video and a famous photograph by Diane Arbus (*Transvestite with a picture of Marilyn Monroe, NYC, 1967*): both images featuring a man, with a feminine quality and pose, placed beside the iconic image of Marilyn Monroe. In my work I take the place of the protagonist of Arbus's picture, holding in my hands one screen shot of a Fatboy's video.

## MIRRORING ARBUS

Digital photographic print  
39.2 x 37.3 cm  
2013



This work is related to the figure of Palmiro Togliatti, the Head of the Italian Communist Party until the 60s. He used to be a very popular leader with a well known integrity. Despite that he had an unexpected affected characteristic: he used to write only with a fountain pen with green ink. I asked some illiterate people to write the same phrase pronounced by Togliatti: “Non perdetevi la testa”, which means “don’t lose your mind”. Thereafter I selected and framed three of those written sheets. Related to this triptych I created a video modifying some original clips from Togliatti’s funeral in Rome in 1964: firstly I changed the colour from the original b/w to green, then I put as soundtrack an old Italian trash song where a woman speaks about a man only in a passionate and sexual way.

### **NON PERDETE LA TESTA (DON'T LOSE YOUR MIND)**

Green ink on three paper sheets  
35 × 107 cm

Video  
3'18"

2014

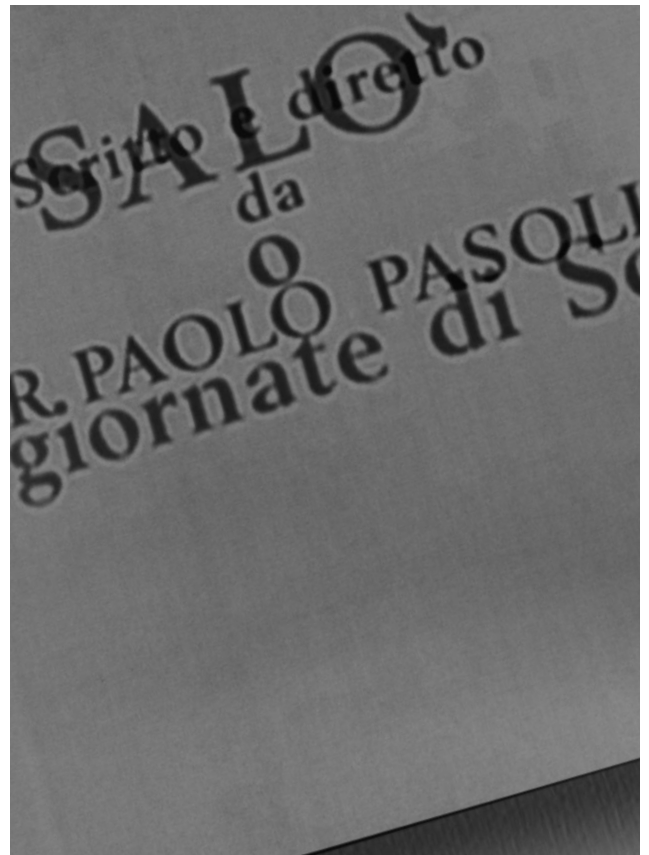
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/fc3v23zl-2lylls7/togliatti-bella.mov?dl=0>

NON PERDETE LA TESTA

non perdetevi la testa

NON PERDETE LA TESTA

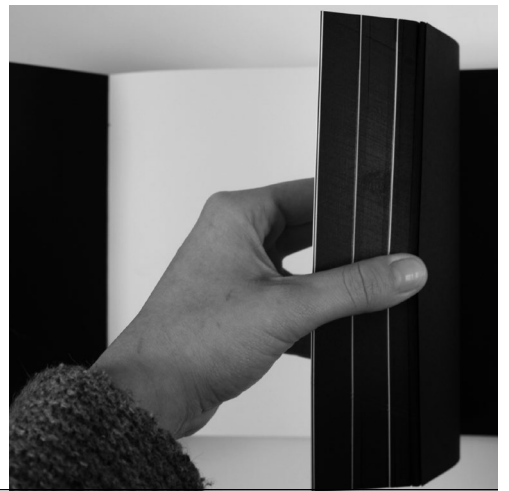
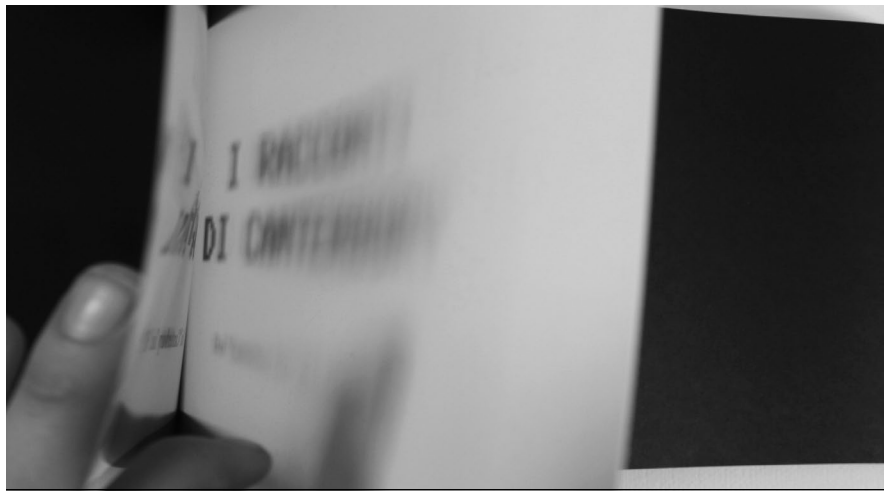
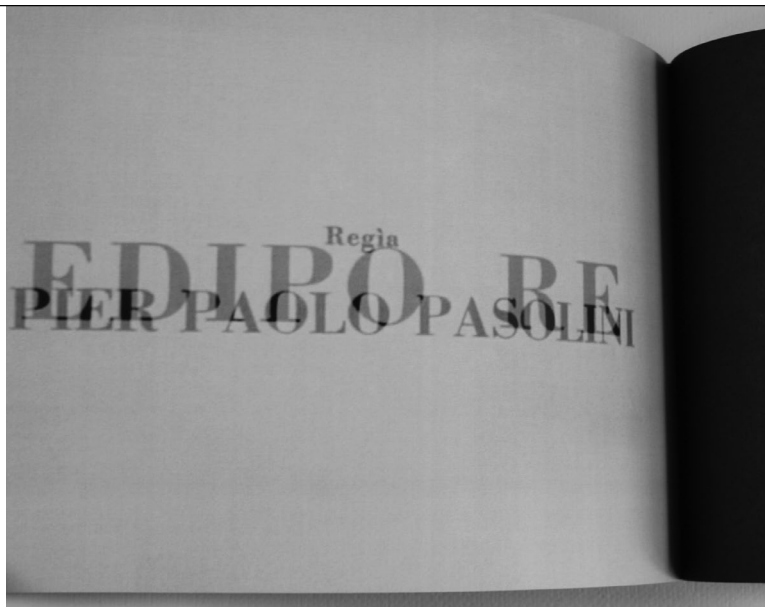
Non perdetevi la  
TESTA



I have discovered that in the whole Pier Paolo Pasolini's cinema production 8 in 12 long films have their main titles with the same characteristics: black font on white background. I have reflected about this peculiarity which became part of Pasolini's style. In particular I have reflected on the films' titles: those stills are totally neutral, they don't communicate anything but, for people who know those films, they have a deep meaning. I tried to overturn this consideration. I have chosen some fonts which, according to the communication rules, mean something clear; my choices were led by the distinctive feature to be in contrast with the subject of the film. Whith those new titles I have create some fake screens printing the titles on acetate pages; those pages are placed on a full-white paper, which present printed backside the original frame of the title taken from YouTube in low quality. The artist's book is composed by those screens interrupted with 7 "pauses" of full-black sheets: 53 sheets as Pasolini's years old when he was cruelly killed.

## UNTITLED

Artist's book.  
20 x 25 x 9 cm  
2013





*Isp. di produzione* . . . **FERNANDO FRANCHI**  
*Isp. amministrativo* . . . **VINCENZO TAITO**  
*Segr. di produzione* . . . . **FRANCO CASATI**  
*Segr. di produzione* . . . . **BRUNO FRASCÀ**  
*Cassiere* . . . . . **GIULIO DE STEPHANIS**

TAITO  
CASATI  
FRASCÀ  
DE STEPHANIS

This video shows a particular intrusion in the subtitles of Pasolini's *Mamma Roma*: a fly creep into the frame and, as well as it has come in, it comes out. The term "comparsa" in the title is the Italian for "background actor". This fly is something inferior compared to the context it appears in; it is insignificant but it can fly everywhere and touches everything: this is how I feel in regard to Pasolini's works. This fly is my dream to take part in a Pasolini's work.

### **COMPARSA (SELF PORTRAIT)**

Video 1'22"  
2012

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/bp3oni-2paglz3qr/COMPARSA%20%28AU-TORITRATTO%29%20%20vers%20ENGLISH.mov>

