

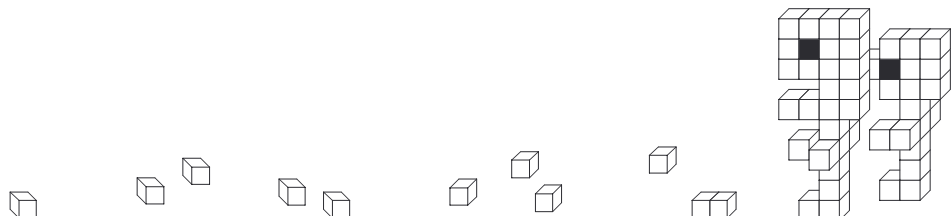
Press release

Marco Poloni: The Desert Room**[plug.in], Basel, October 21st through November 21st 2005****Opening: Thursday, October 20th, 20:00**

[plug.in] is particularly glad to present a personal exhibition of Marco Poloni, an artist living in Geneva and Chicago. Since 1997, Poloni attracts attention with an artistic practice of remarkable precision. This year, his work was seen at the Kunstverein Freiburg im Breisgau (personal exhibition in January) and at the 51st Venice Biennial where he was one of the artists officially representing Switzerland. The exhibition at [plug.in] offers to the public the opportunity to discover a new facet of this work in Switzerland, where he has not been showcased by a public institution since 2002.

Poloni explores the relationship between reality and its reproduction by means of the camera. To this end, on the one hand he makes use of photography (series shown at Freiburg and Venice), and on the other hand he produces media installations. To qualify these type of works, the artist speaks of viewing systems. It is a project of this type that Poloni will produce for the exhibition at [plug.in], in which he asserts a new development of his discourse on perception and the media.

The visitor enters a room. This room is a reconstruction of reporter David Locke's room in a small hotel of the North African desert in Antonioni's 1975 feature film "The Passenger."



Evening. It is very hot. Fluorescent light flickers outside – most probably, a defective neon sign. A ceiling fan cuts through thick air. A TV set shows the news channel Al-Jazeera. On the table, a laptop is open with video editing software. On the screen, the visitor sees an image of the space in which he is located. Intermittently, news footage from a conflict zone appears.

The images of the hotel room are produced by an observation camera that the visitors can cause to move using the computer's keyboard. The images in real time seem to be filmed from within the room. The objects in the room appear in the image, but the visitor can't see himself. Likewise, it is impossible to locate the camera in the room.

In fact, the camera moves in a reproduction of the space. The visitor, disturbed by his own vanishing, will finally discover the existence of the scale model. But the impression left by the paradoxical experience of his own absence will be a lasting one. This system triggers a doubt about the image and its capacity to deliver a coherent representation of reality. Directly engaged, the visitor is called to perceive himself perceiving.

The curator of the exhibition is Pierre-André Lienhard, who has followed Poloni's work since its inception and can be considered as the finest expert on his work.

This project represents an ideal case for [plug.in] as it allows to reiterate existing synergies between new media and visual arts. The discourses of the artist and the curator on perception hinge upon the field of visual arts while being of particular relevance to the domain of new media. The exhibition dates are set so as to coincide with the Viper Festival, which attracts to Basel a national and international public, specialized in new media.

The work of Marco Poloni is documented in the following recent publications:

Monographies:

2005 *Marco Poloni. Passengers.* [About the photographic oeuvre]
Text by Pierre-André Lienhard and interview with Stefan Banz.
Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg (French, German, English)
ISBN 3-936711-61-5; Hardcover CHF 45.00

2004 *Marco Poloni. Never Mind the Gap.* [About the viewing systems]
Essay by Pierre-André Lienhard and interview with Edouard Monnet
Verlag für Moderne Kunst, Nürnberg ; (French, German, English)
ISBN 3-933096-99-5; Softcover CHF 53.00

Catalogue of the exhibition at the Swiss pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennial 2005:

2005 *Shadows Collide with People – Gianni Motti, Shahryar Nashat, Marco Poloni, Ingrid Wildi.*
Federal Office of Culture, edition fink, Bern/Zürich ; (English, Italian, German, French)
ISBN 3-906086-79-8; CHF 45.00

Marco Poloni's exhibition at [plug.in] is sponsored by: Fonds cantonal d'art contemporain (Canton de Genève), Fonds d'art contemporain de la Ville de Genève, GGG Basel, National Versicherung, Fondation Nestlé pour l'art, Pro Helvetia, CATV Satelliten-Technik Basel.