

INTERVIEW TO TEHO TEARDO

On 19th September 2015 the label **Spècula** published **Teho Teardo's** album **Le retour à la raison. Musique pour trois film de Man Ray** (Teho Teardo is the pseudonym of **Mauro Teardo**, born in Pordenone, 1966). The project had already been performed during an exhibition dedicated to Man Ray on 6th and on 7th December 2014 at Villa Manin (UD) and then it had been presented on 6th February at **Museo Nazionale del Cinema di Torino** and on 7th February at **MAXXI** in Rome.

The act of rethinking **Man Ray's** work (Philadelphia, 1890 - Parigi, 1976) implies an identification with a stranger who spoke with huge clarity of mind and freedom about Paris – and so about Europe – before the big void caused by dictatorships and the Second World War. Man Ray wrote in 1926: "I tried to get visions that the dusk or a too vivid light, or their fugacity, or the slowness of our ocular apparatus take away from our sight. I've always been astonished, often enchanted, sometimes literally in bliss."

- 1) In his three movies Man Ray went against narrative paradigms and medium specificities, so that he gave this answer to a journalist that was wandering about the destiny of Surrealist cinema: "There is no future for abstract movies. Surrealism will inevitably influence cinema, maybe saving it from the nothingness of abstraction and the banality of technical rigidity". Was he right?

I'm not sure if the point is to be right or wrong; I think it's much more significant the kind of change Man Ray brought into art and cinema.

When I was working to the music for these three movies I realized that I've seen some images that had influenced loads of later movies. I was in presence of a contaminant agent, infective. A virus that causes illness, for which a cure is necessary. An original way to raise problems towards ourselves and the others.

- 2) **Le Retour à la raison** (1923), presented for the first time during the Dada event **Coeur à barbe**, it's a filmic collage realized beyond every formal and content structure. In 3 minutes, rayograms in motion (in which the film is impressed by contact) alternate to thunders in a night sky and hallucinatory images of Kiki de Montparnasse's chest.

The title **Emak Bakia** (1926) refers to a basque's idiom which means "leave me alone". Even this movie, which was projected for the first time in Paris in 1927 at Studio des Ursulines, has an illogical evolution and an odd structure. Some photographic tricks suggest a woman's mental illness. It was defined by Man Ray: "A series of fragments, a cinempoem with a certain optical sequence make up a whole that still remains a fragment. [...] It is not an abstract or narrative movie; its *raison d'être* is in its inventions of forms and of light movements, while the most objective parts interrupt the monotony of

abstract inventions or work as interpunction.”

L'étoile de mer (1927) is a Surrealist movie based on a Robert Desnos's poem, in which a woman abandons his lover for another man, who consoles with a starfish. **Marcel Duchamp** personifies Rose Sélavy, that is “Eros is life”, in a famous portrait made by Man Ray. In 1926 with this pseudonym Duchamp sign the Dada movie **Anemic Cinema** (Anemic is the anagram for cinema).

How much did the vision of these movies influence the making of this album?

Eh, this is the longest question asked me during the last three years, but it allows me to put back a fundamental aspect for my musical relationship with these three movies: you can do whatever you want, but you have to know that Man Ray can show up at your door and burn down your house. Or we can say that the limitless sense of freedom according to which apparently everything is possible is a call to life; everybody has to frame his own world with his rules and limits. The extent of the horizon has to be revisited within the lens of a film camera, so it suggests a personal path and point of view.

3) How this artistic partnership with Man Ray was born?

In the easiest way: Piero Colussi, the Superintendent of Villa Manin, commissioned me this work. He thought my music might have been appropriate for proposing again these three Man Ray's movies during the retrospective it was held last year in the villa. They gave me carte blanche and I spent a pair of months completely immersed in these three movies. When I finished I was displeased, I wanted to start again, perhaps for never getting out from there. In the same period a friend of mine sent me a tape with the only record of a band I had when I started playing. Our name was **Rayogramma** because we were inspired by Man Ray's work.

4) Another main character of Man Ray's work is the metronome, defined as an object that has to be destroyed. The act of destroying a metronome means the destruction of the metro, and consequently, of the rhythm. Could this idea be at the base of Dada-inspired soundtracks?

Rhythm defines time, so the analogy metronome-time is natural. Maybe abused, predictable, but certainly very original when it was made a century ago. These are not Dada-inspired soundtracks, I didn't want to quote that imaginary. I can say that I've seen people moved among the public, and this suggests that you are building something, the exact contrary of destroying.

5) How these visual collage, intentionally illogical, from images become music?

I've always been perplexed when these kind of associations, very frequent in Dadaism and Surrealism, were defined as illogical. Sometimes the association of two distant elements gives birth to unconceivable connections, it doesn't make any

sense to be deprived of them protected by opinions as “illogical”.

The exploration of the ego founds in Surrealism an inedited dimension, providing new themes to art.

- 6) Some songs explicitly refer to the titles of Man Ray’s movies, while other songs are less clear. What do titles as *Hotel Istria*, *Danger danger danger*, *Underwater constellations*, *Synonyme de noie* refer to?

To unveil the meaning of titles is like to try to explain the meaning of lyrics, and this makes the magic disappear.

- 7) The album can be proud of its collaborations, such as that with **Joachim Arbeit (Einsturzende Neubauten)**. How were they born and which form did they take?

I really esteem Joachim’s talent, and also **Joe Lally (Fugazi)**, who played in this album. These are people I usually hang out with, so it’s natural to play together and to share projects.

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