

O Sole Mio

ISSUE 01

15 April 2020

'O SOLE MIO!
(MY SUNSHINE)
SERENATA

Edited by Mario Favilli
G. CAPURRO
Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole

NEAPOLITAN SERENADE
EDUARDO di CAPUA

Andantino

PIANO *mf*

1. Che bel - la co - sa 'na iur - na - ta'e
2. Lu - ce - no e llas - tre d' a fe - ne - sta
3. Quan - no fa not - te e'ò so - le se ne
4. What love - ly sun - shine! What a day of
5. Bright shine the small panes In thy cham - ber -
6. When night ap - proach - es And the sun is

Ryan Gander
Rayyane Tabet

Parasol unit

foundation for contemporary art

Introduction by Ziba Ardalan

Che bella cosa ... The opening lyrics of the iconic 'O Sole Mio' are simply magical. In all the years I have known this beautiful song, I have never encountered anyone who was not moved by its sublime energy, echo of faith, incredible passion and its promise of hope. Countless times, I have felt my spirit lifting as I listened to 'O Sole Mio', which is why during these intensely stressful months, as our world tries desperately to overcome Covid-19, I find solace in the song's certainty of a happier world.



As many of us will know, 'O Sole Mio' is a Neapolitan song written in 1898. Sadly, Italy is the country that has so far suffered the highest number of Covid-19 cases and related fatalities in Europe. The scale of this pandemic is far greater than any other disaster that has befallen the country since World War II, and no solution is yet in sight. The Covid-19 tragedy is, of course, a world-wide phenomenon of pain and human devastation. Will this experience make our global world re-write new codes of conduct?

Currently most of us, if still healthy, are living in 'self-isolation', are 'social-distancing' or taking refuge in nature. Initial disbelief or denial have gradually given way to a more realistic understanding of the bleak reality of this disease as we try to make sense of it all. Some have found benefit in no longer having to travel so much and are using the time gained to undertake meaningful activities. Others lament having to forgo cultural life and not being able to meet with friends and family. Luckily, the flexible side of human nature enables us to adapt and to focus on the positive aspect of even these most unwelcome of circumstances. We find ways to make productive use of the exceptionally available time by reading, writing, making or simply thinking and reflecting on issues we've recently not had time to do. Perhaps we will observe our surroundings with heightened attention. How incredible and surrealistic that in 2020 we are experiencing some aspects of life as it was a century ago.

On reflection, we ask ourselves whether a pandemic could have been avoided or better prepared for? Why did it happen? Have we gone too far and too rapidly in a world where everything including our mind has had to perform at the click of a mouse? Did we forget to update our social codes of conduct and personal responsibilities in keeping with the exponential increases in world population and mass movements of people? Obviously, there are many questions we can ask ourselves, which confirms what a privilege it is to be human. It is in this spirit that I have asked the artistic community – artists and other creative thinkers – to join with Parasol unit in a meaningful project that aims to counterbalance an utterly grim situation with a set of individually inspirational works.

As I mentioned earlier, 'O Sole Mio' formulates the hope and promise of a better future and although the lyrics of this charming song take a romantic turn as they unfold, my fascination with it has always been the freshness and hope it expresses both in its opening lines and as a whole. I do hope all those who are invited to offer their own take on this joyful song of hope will connect with its message and devise words and images that will be singularly thought-provoking. Many artists and creative thinkers have responded to my request and several have already provided their contribution. During the months to come, we at Parasol unit look forward to publishing these inspiring works on a weekly basis, which I am certain will help us to re-establish the positive.

Ziba Ardalan
Founder, Artistic and Executive Director

Ryan Gander

Rayyane Tabet

As we all experience this challenging and exceptional time across the globe, the common feeling is how surreal it all feels – the empty streets, the closed venues, schools, museums and shops. If you are lucky enough to be able to work from home, work and home life overlap and interweave. Home-schooling is the new norm. Daily perambulations are sanctioned for one brief outing, if any at all. Yet, we each find different ways to bring everyday encounters into our home or even to bring the outside in. Conversations, classes, connections and even celebrations are now made through virtual windows.

For this first issue of *O Sole Mio* we are focusing on the work of Ryan Gander and Rayyane Tabet.

Known for producing wide-ranging multimedia works, from sculpture to film, installation, design, writing and performance, Ryan Gander has established an eclectic artistic output that principally interrogates language and knowledge. His works are often playful, provocative and complex. He presents the viewer with the notion of *what-if* and an invitation to investigate further, even if only psychologically.

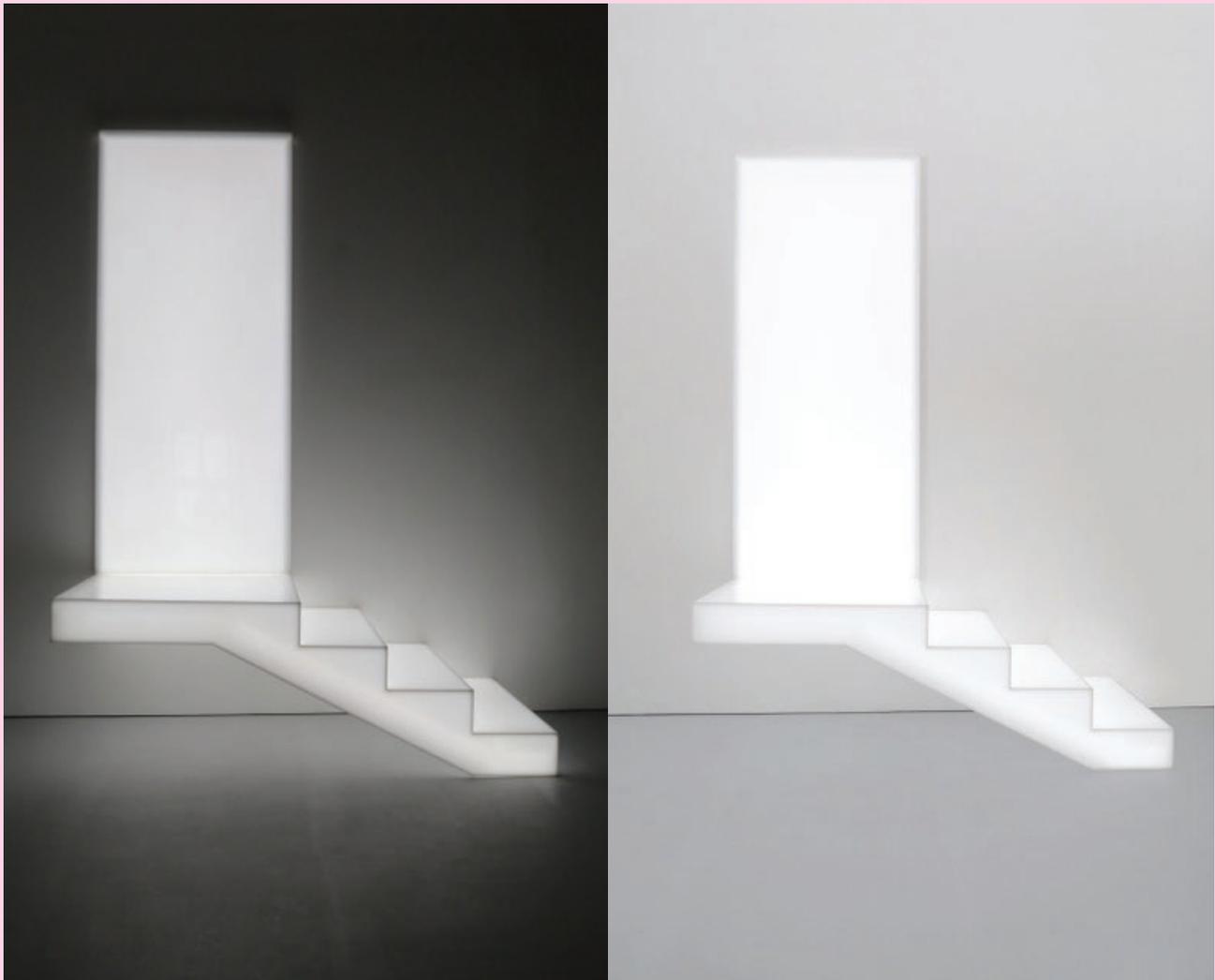
Ryan Gander, born 1976, lives and works in Suffolk and London.

Parasol unit presented Rayyane Tabet's first solo exhibition in the United Kingdom in the autumn of 2019. The exhibition, *Encounters*, brought together for the first time works from the past 13 years. Rayyane Tabet's sculptures and found objects present fleeting moments in time and place, offering alternative perceptions of political and personal events. He explores the relationship that drifts between the past and present, between memory and reality.

Rayyane Tabet, born 1983, lives and works in Beirut, Lebanon.

Ryan Gander

Conditions that will reshape you (Because you bequeath yourself redundant to conditions that will reshape you), 2018



Ryan Gander's contribution to the project are two images placed side-by-side of *Conditions that will reshape you (Because you bequeath yourself redundant to conditions that will reshape you), 2018*, taken in natural light during the day and in the evening. Produced hollow in Plexiglas with light panels glowing inside, the small

flight of steps leads to an equally light-filled doorway. The work brings an element of hope with the idea that perhaps this is a portal to another world or time. It allows you to imagine and question, if you had the chance, where would you go and what would you do if you could travel through time?

Rayyane Tabet

Automatic drawing with yellow pencil and marker on sheet music, 2020

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3. *Quan - no fa - not - te e'ò so - le se - ne*
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5. *Bright shine the small panes In thy cham - ber -*
6. *When night ap - proach - es And the sun is*

so - le, n' à - ria se - re - na dop - - po 'na tem - pe - stal -
to - ia; 'na la - van - na - ra can - ta e se - ne van - ta,
soen - ne, mme ve - ne qua - se 'na ma - lin - cu - ni - a;
beau - ty! How calm the air is When a storm is end - ed!
-win - dow. A wo - man, sing - ing, Cleans - es lin - en neat - ly
set - ting, A mel - an - cho - ly Fills my heart with yearn - ing

Rayyane Tabet's contribution to the project is an image of sheet music for the song 'O Sole Mio' covered in spontaneously drawn lines made with yellow pencil and marker. The swirling markings range from heavy strokes to delicate, ghostly configurations. As the title suggests, it is an automatic drawing – an unconsciously made movement of the pen, used historically by psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud to explore the unconscious minds of his patients.

The image shows a page of sheet music for the song 'O Sole Mio'. The music is written on a grand staff with a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are in Italian and English. The page is heavily decorated with yellow automatic drawings, including swirling lines and scribbles that cover the music and text. The drawings vary in density and style, from heavy, dark strokes to light, delicate lines. The overall effect is a layered, artistic representation of the original sheet music.

cresc.

pe' ll'a - ria fre - sca pa - re già 'na fe - sta Che bel - la
 e pe tra - men - te tor - ce, span ne e can - ta Lu - ce - no 'e
 sot - to 'a fe - ne - sta to - ia re - star - ri - a, quan - no fa
 The scene so fair is Like a fe - te - day splen - did! What love - ly
 With strong arms wring - ing While her song rings sweet - ly. Bright shine the
 Un - to thy win - doz Fain I would be turn - ing. When night ap -

cresc.

mf

co - sa 'na iur - na - ta's so - le.
 lla - stre d' à fe - ne - sta to - ia. } Ma n' a - tu so - le
 not - te e'ò so - le se ne scen - ne. }
 sun - shine! What a day of beau - ty!
 small panes in thy cham - ber win - dow. } But I know sun - shine
 proach - es And the sun is set - ting. }

mf

— cchiù bello, ohi - ne, 'o so - le mi - o sta nfron - te a
 — more love - ly still From thy dear fea - tures Its bright rays

The French poet and founder of the surrealist movement, André Breton, was strongly influenced by Freud's ideas and in his 1924 manifesto for surrealism he described automatism as 'the dictation of thought in the absence of all control exercised by reason and outside of moral or aesthetic concerns' and produced the earliest examples of automatic writing. As surrealism developed, other artists such as Joan Miró, Max Ernst and André Masson introduced automatism to visual art and created various types of automatic drawing and painting which encouraged chance and spontaneity.

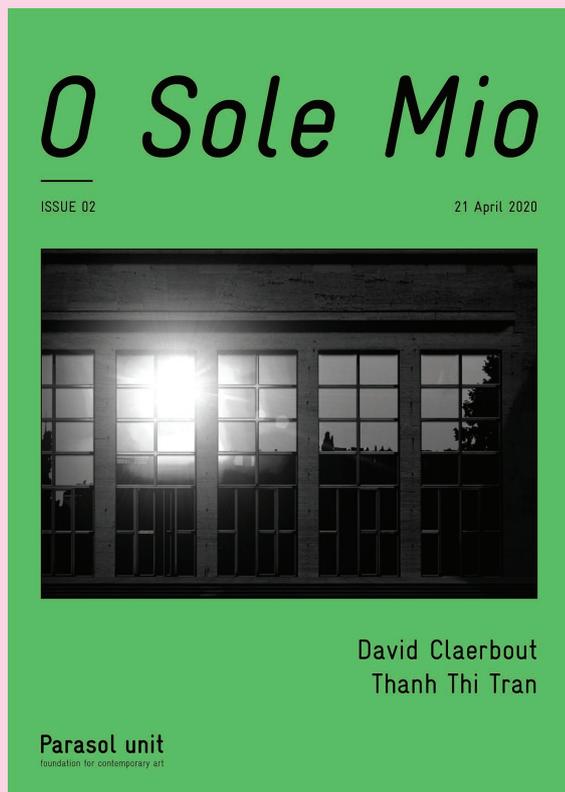
te, _____ 'o so - - le, 'o so - le mi - o _____
 thrill! _____ That sun - - shine, ra - diant sun - shine _____

1. & 2.
 sta nfron - te a te, _____ sta nfron - te a te!
 My heart doth fill! _____ My heart doth fill! _____

3.
 sta nfron - te a te, _____ a te. _____
 My heart doth fill! _____ doth fill! _____

pp *ppp*
p *pp* *dim.*

Upcoming Issue



ISSUE 02 featuring works by

David Claerbout
Thanh Thi Tran

Words by Ziba Ardalan and Kirsteen Cairns.