

## ***Persistence***

On the exhibition *Lapse* by Arnold Dreyblatt  
*Museolaboratorio*, Città Sant'Angelo, Italy, 2018

The current state of contemporary art and music, now, in the second decade of the new century, raises a question of an almost mathematical nature, which reflects on the relationship between the passing of the time and the speed of the diffusion and finding of the information. This relationship, objectively, produces the continuous birth and disappearance of medium/short-lived artistic phenomena, creating pointillistic and vaporizable intellectual textures of knowledge. A vertical juxtaposition of fragmented infinitesimal segments, that appears, in its entirety, more and more impenetrable and "sauvage". Orient yourself in this jumble of volatile details (without losing the consciousness of the route) it's a very tiring operation, that requires method, obsession and awareness of oneself, aiming to re-discover and re-facing the primordial question of time.

Looking for a correct path is therefore an operation similar to that of filtering with a net a large quantity of sand, to find out if, in the multitude, are hidden bigger and solid stones. Applying this figurative action to the passing of time, it could happen, in its gestural reiteration, to run into the consideration of a rather clear and unshakeable concept, to whom, by convection, we could give the name of "persistence".

Persistence, in fact, is one of the key words that can help us to decode the work of Arnold Dreyblatt, considering its atavistic sense and placement in the history of experimental music and media art.

The American artist, in his transmedial research, focuses, a discreet part of his attention, on the results of the repetition of a phenomenon (physical or cognitive) in a more or less prolonged lapse of time, coming across technical and conceptual matters inherent in the physical and human phenomenology of a determinate (or shared) history.

This Dreyblatt's theoretical guideline permeate all of his fields of expression and investigation, creating a "fil rouge" that relate the studies on memory with his experimentation in music and videoart. The idea of persistence is present both in the early and contemporary production: if on the one hand we find an in-depth study of personal and collective memories, concept of archive and relationship between history and stories (all analyzed in a time segment decided a priori), on the other hand we find his experiments on the vibration of the strings, where the combination between harmony and acoustic physics determines the production of original scores, aimed at realizing minimalist and transcendent structures - where progressive minimal alterations create an ecstatic and ancestral collision with the perception of time. Likewise, the video artistic research of the composer, from the early work in the seventies, investigated the mutation of optical patterns (of a magnetic nature), where the repetition of textures and images is aimed at producing hallucinatory video loops. The individual perception of the audience discovers, through these artworks, the changeability of its own unconscious, which, in the presence of infinitesimal and "organic" changes, experiences perceptive spatio-temporal alterations.

With Lapse the artist creates a path that intersects, in an immersive journey, all the artistic languages used by himself during his career. Interconnecting the different disciplines in a perceptive combination of temporal units (where the time, in its infinity, is divided into autonomous modules), the exhibition recites an unique and “orchestrated” subject, result of the assembly and cyclical reiteration of each elements.

The display of documents from the Dreyblatt Archive (1973 - 2003), together with the presentation of his early video works (a batch of six analogue videos in European premiere dated 1973 —1976), the recent video installation Screen Memory (2017), the multi-channel sound work Turntable History (2009) and Monochordo (a multi-room installation composed of seven tuned monochord instruments), allow us to extend the artist’s work in a period of more than four decades. In this time interval, Dreyblatt, with persistent punctuality and discretion, accompanies to us the entire history of minimalist music and new media art.

The Dreyblatt’s exhibition for Museolaboratorio delivers a clear and linear cross-section of almost fifty years of sonic and audiovisual experimentation, observed and/or interpreted, in first person, by the artist himself through his artistic and human presence.

**Marco Marzuoli, 2018**