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Author || Mauro Petruzzello
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Framerate 0, 2009

ideation Diana Arbib, Luca Brinchi, Maria Carmela Milano, Pasquale Tricoci, Roberta Zanardo

live video processing Diana Arbib, Luca Brinchi

sound and live processing Dario Salvagnini

3D elaboration Alessandro Rosa

organization Elena Lamberti

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by Mauro Petruzzello

“By experiment we mean implementing an empirical operation designed to validate or disprove a hypothesis in the context of a theory, or simply to observe phenomena in depth in order to improve our knowledge of them. The scenic space will be our lab, the place where we can transfer the phenomena which normally occur in nature and subject them to temporal reductions or accelerations.” With this statement, expressed in its program notes and on its website, Santasangre presented a series of experiments (*Framerate 0* and *Sincronie di errori non prevedibili*) and the next phase of its research divided into hypotheses (*Prima ipotesi*, *Seconda ipotesi*, *Terza ipotesi*), which characterized its 2009/2010 project cycle. The final result of the intense activity linked to this project was the creation of the play *Bestiale improvviso*. *Framerate 0* offered a first look at the horizon that Santasangre explored through this work cycle. The imagery ideally joined together post-atomic scenarios with those of a primordial world. The ceilings, walls and in general spaces that in turn hosted the work were probed with bright chromatic effects and abstract projections, starting with shafts of white-cold neon lights and proceeding through swirls of icy colors to white and blue flashes. At the same time creaks that became sinister industrial-type noises were arranged in a sonic language that evoked both a vending machine and the crackle of melting ice. The spectators watching the play were surrounded by a sonic-visual sensory stimulation that often shook them in the form of actual sound vibrations from bass notes. After the climax marked by flashes of lightning and the dense sounds, the drama seemed to relax and focus on a huge sheet of ice lying on the stage. Bombarded by flashes, it was lifted, supported by four inserts that perforated its “skin,” and rotated ninety degrees. The sound got more relaxed, stately and atmospheric, opening definitively into a sustained bass register and letting the spectators also perceive the noise of water dripping from the block of ice. The play, which lasted only twenty minutes, ended with the full-blown vision of the new body. The sheet of ice wasn’t the only body on stage, because through the configuration of its actual chromatic and sonic dramaturgies Santasangre admitted a parity of languages that made up the scene, conferring on light and sound the dignity of the bodies that inhabited it. Although on stage there was no body of flesh and bones, the ice sheet seemed to completely absorb the qualities of presence. The spectators were overwhelmed physically by its cold breathing, which was almost like that of an archetypal animal or a pulsating energy. At the same time the way the hooks were perforated its “skin” recalled a certain aesthetic of the most extreme body art, which the group drew on in its first performances (*Trasposizioni* and *Wunderkammer*) and plays (*Celle silenziose*), here definitively transmigrated into the “flesh” of the ice.