

Leone Contini – Imagined Menu

June 19 – July 6, 2014

Opening and Performance: Wednesday, June 18, 7:00 p.m.

Picknick Reading: Thursday, July 3, 6:00 p.m.

Olympiaberg, Olympia Park Munich

Meeting point: Entrance to Sea Life

Participation is limited to 40 guests

(Performances in english)

Kunstraum München in collaboration with Kunstverein Milano

»Imagined Menu« by Italian artist Leone Contini arises from a historical event that happened in October 1917 with the worst defeat in the history of the Italian military: the »Rotta di Caporetto« (the Defeat of Caporetto). Between October and November about 300,000 Italian soldiers were taken prisoner and later on allocated to prison camps in Germany and Austro-Hungary; the status of the soldier suddenly changes: from being a fighting-machine he is turned into a defeated device, a prisoner of war. His body, which until that moment was fed by rations and canned food, now becomes drained and undernourished.

One of the prisoners of Caporetto is Giosuè Fiorentino, a young Sicilian officer and great-uncle of Leone Contini, who was interned at Cellelager, north of Hannover, along with 3,000 other Italian officers. The small community of his barrack – the barrack being the minimum social unit in the life of the camp – experiences hunger, cold and despair but at the same time develops strategies of collective resistance. The prisoners contrast the »Sbobba«, the soup that barely keeps them alive in the camp, by sharing recipes and »memories« of intensely desired food, which is also subject of endless discussions among them. The sharing of this »imagined« food is probably an attempt to cope with the extreme hunger, to redirect this basal instinct and convert a crowd of hungry bodies into something akin to a community. This conviviality – though virtual – is in itself an act of collective resistance.

Giosuè Fiorentino wrote down in two hand-bound notebooks the recipes described by his fellow prisoners; the result is a vast mosaic of Italian regional cuisines at the time of 1900, about 250 recipes from Friuli to Sicily. B98, the identifier of his barrack, became also the title of one of the two cookbooks.

»Imagined Menu«, after having been presented in 2013 by Kunstverein Amsterdam, arrives in Munich with two events:

June 18, 2014 – The Kunstraum München will present in cooperation with the Kunstverein Milano a lecture performance conceived as a flowing narrative that de-constructs the means for nutrition and control over the body of the soldiers during the Great War, from the trenches to the prison camps after the defeat of Caporetto. The »traces« produced during the lecture performance will remain on view until July 6.

July 3, 2014 – The recipes from the cookbook B98, imagined by Italian prisoners during the First World War, will be turned into real food in the form of a picnic on the Olympiaberg, the hill that was piled up from the debris of Munich generated by the bombings during the Second World War, today a leisure urban park. Each dish will be an opportunity for reflections and informal talks between the artist and his guests.

Leone Contini (1976, Florence) has studied Philosophy and Cultural Anthropology in Siena. His research is mainly focused on intercultural frictions, conflict and power relations, displacement, migration and Diaspora. He develops lecture performances, collective interventions in public space, textual and audio-visual narratives, blogging and self-publishing. In the past years, he has exhibited at Delfina Foundation, London, 2014; Khoj, New Delhi, 2014; Villa Romana, Florence, 2014; DOCVA, Milan, 2014; Tirana Art Lab, 2013; UNIDEE, Biella, 2013; Kunstverein Amsterdam, 2013. Residencies: »The Politics of Food« at Delfina Foundation, London, 2014; »In Context: public.art.ecology – Food Ed. III« at Khoj, New Delhi, 2014; Tirana Art Lab, 2013; »#1 Under Construction« at Zico House and Frigoriferi Milanesi, Milan and Beirut, 2012.

Curated by Emily Barsi

www.leonecontini.wordpress.com

www.kunstverein.it/en/

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Supported by the Landeshauptstadt München Kulturreferat

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The Kunstraum München is an independent not-for-profit art space supported by the Munich Department of Culture.