



RAM at Venice Biennale 2003; photos by Marco Fedele di Catrano

INTRODUCTION

BY MATTEO GIACOMELLI

'... it is true that art is eternal, but it was always connected to matter, while we wish that ... through space, it could last a millennium, even in the transmission of one minute.' (Lucio Fontana)

The identity of RAM (www.radioartemobile.it) fluctuates, including the participation of different identities, creating new modes of action and interaction with the audience.

RAM is an 'artistic container' designed to host the voices of all those who express themselves through it or interact with it, influencing its form.

The identity of RAM is multiple.

The modes of expression in this project are multimedia in character, conceived for new expressive needs, in an attempt to establish non-hierarchical communication based on exchange rather than assertion.

The sound, the visual image provided by

the artists, case by case, who offer a different interface to RAM in keeping with the opportunity for presentation-transmission, as well as the use of the Internet, are the tools for repositioning.

The practice of proceeding through fragments and contaminating languages, sound, writing and image appears to be aimed at creating an articulated artistic context that embraces the world through the web.

RAM expresses itself and develops like a 'living organism', a flux in continuous movement.

The realtime usage mode permits access, at the moment of connection to the site, to the history of RAM, through the broadcasts, interviews and sound projects by artists, in constant movement and change.

On the www.radioartemobile.it website this material forms the 'museum of sound in art', not subject to limitations or copyright. The material can be accessed from any computer and freely downloaded.

In the pollution of the visual sphere,

the continuous bombardment of incessant images, RAM places itself in a space with a different form of availability, offering the possibility of a relationship with art based on reflection and meditation.

This project, due to its inner vitality, has changed over time, evolved and acquired specializations.

At the outset, as a European project in 2002, which we could almost define as archeo-history, considering the transfer speed of information on the web, RAM followed a terrestrial, linear path structured in stages, through significant places of artistic research in Europe; from the SMAK in Ghent, to the *Färgfabriken* in Stockholm, the University of Lüneburg, the IUAV in Venice, and other places, involving artists, curators and university professors: from Jan Hoet to Franz West, as well as Jan Åman, Harald Szeemann, Fabrice Hybert and many other voices, creating on-site broadcasts for an ideal mapping of the different atmospheres in 'doing art' in Europe.

Franz West Pavilion, photo by Marco Fedele di Catrano



In this first phase the visual impact of RAM was conceived by Federico Fusi, who made a 'van-work' capable of attracting attention to the studio and the staff of RAM in transit around Europe.

From this starting point RAM continued to exist, autonomously, beyond the presentation interface of the European tour, and reappeared at the Venice Biennale in the hospitable 'frame' created by Franz West, a yellow canopy on which the message RAMRAMRAMRAMRAM appeared, as if to indicate an ideal trip around the world, or the 'world wide web' character of RAM's Internet broadcasting.

Mario Merz made the RAM poster, with the lively sign of the spiral. The yellow canopy, with tables and chairs beneath, for debates and encounters organized in a few hours, came alive with voices, music and performances.

Jimmie Durham, Janusz Podrazik/Alfredo Pirri and Nicoletta Agostini, and many artists like Jonas Mekas and Luca Vitone, made this place in the *Giardini delle Tese* at the *Arsenale* the true 'crossover piazza' of the Biennale, a lounge where it was possible to converse and discuss many different themes.

The piazza, because it was also on line, extended to every corner of the world, involving people who visited the website in real time.

For the broadcast 'The cities of RAM', at Paliano on 30th July 2003, the artists Armin Linke/Paola Di Bello, Carlos Garaicoa, Alberto Garutti and Lorenza Lucchi Basili interpreted the RAM interface, presenting works on the theme of the city, while a series of telephone calls to artists scattered in different cities around the world, New York, Havana, Vancouver, Milan, London and other places, permitted the theme to take on new elements and aspects.

So RAM produces interviews and thematic broadcasts, involving artists, but it is also the instrument which, in the hands of the artist, permits creation of an original artwork.

The act of 'sculpting from within' on the part of the artists is accompanied by that of the 'sculpting from without' by the audience; by means of the forum where listeners can influence the content of RAM, sending questions to the artists during the broadcasts, accentuating the characteristics of interaction and redeeming the audience from its traditional passive role as a mere receptor, offering the chance for active participation.

In the electronic era, being able to talk on the web about things 'you would never talk to anyone about' means that a thought, an idea, a word can be picked up by someone else, shared, 'forwarded', and that voices close to yours, in terms of sentiment, can still respond.

The horizon is like a sea into which to toss message sealed inside a bottle...

"...an Elsewhere that makes its own 'egothic' game a fair of art with the full possibility that many people can express themselves in art, with or without the artist." (Luigi Ontani)

- 1 Manifesto of Movimento Spaziale per la Televisione in 'MassMedia', bimonthly review of communications, Capone, Lecce, May-June 1998, p.39.
- 2 Interview with Luigi Ontani, 50th Venice Biennial, 12-13-14 June 2003, 'RAM archive', www.radioartemobile.it