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MARCO LAVAGETTO: THE GROUP SHOW

Opening Wednesday, 14 November, 6–8pm

14 November, 2018 – 12 January, 2019
Bucharest



Starring: Marco Lavagetto.

Known aliases: Carmelo Gavotta, Marcelo Gavotta, Nancy Bellano, Dimitri Bioy, Francesco Bon ami, Santo Colella, Bola Ecu, Oliver Kamping, Tito Mussoni, Morire Nkulo, Hamid Piccardo, Ines Seni, Oliviero Toscani, Rocco Toscani

Lava-getto: combination of the Italian *lavare* “to wash” and *gettare* “to toss”

Marco Lavagetto has allowed his creative mind to become completely untethered. It thrives best in the dark. Chase the internet into those deepest rabbit holes, those corners where the slime live, to find the darkest secrets of mankind's borders. Lavagetto has summoned and embodied them like readymades. His creative consciousness has fractalized into channels, literally splitting him into multiple personas. Each have rich vocabularies, proclivities and cultural conditions that have made artworks that channel their energy, tell their story.

Marco Lavagetto lives and works in Genoa in his family-run coffin business. This occupation makes his name an etymological riddle when thinking of carrying people into the afterlife. We've met numerous times following that initial moment when I discovered his true identity.

Our first meeting was at the opening of the 2011 Venice Biennale. I was watching a performance inside a makeshift Oscar Tuazon pavilion when I saw him standing there in complete black attire: suit, shirt, tie and sunglasses; a black hole with smiling teeth. He was nice and we were excited to meet each other. I was still scared.

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We talked Biennale small talk and then I asked what his plan for the day was. He spoke a fast mumbling Italian but said, "I was gonna have a friend film me shoot a gun at Vittorio Sgarbi (the curator of the Italian Pavilion) but not really hit him just freak everyone out... but my friend who was going to film it chickened-out and I brought the gun and everything." I asked if he had a gun and he opened his briefcase to show it to me. Everything zoomed into the present moment. I was at the edge of my eyeballs. My skin burned. I wasn't safe. In a panic, I wondered if I would see my future wife Mette again. I thought about how to get near more people.

Minutes later we arrived at a packed performance in the US pavilion. I saw people I knew. I felt I would get away from him and it wouldn't be weird between us. We hugged and said goodbye. I knew we would meet again. It was destiny.

This is a retrospective of all of Marco Lavagetto's masks, of all his lives for which he has been a medium, transmitting their every forensic detail. Embodiments that produced their own cultural languages. Hoaxes that became legends. Revelations that will only expose more secrets. Everything will be revealed.

Marco wanted to title this menagerie of his psyche "Horror Culo." It offers a brilliantly direct truth to his imagery if we imagine the ass as a savage gateway to the mind's eye. This exhibition is not nice, nor is it for the weak of heart. The avant-garde is not supposed to be fun. It is through trauma that we become stronger.

Marco Lavagetto is a fan, a fanatic, possibly a fascist, probably a crypto-fascist, a bottom-dweller, a pirate, a pervert, a prophet, a puppet, a hacker, a terrorist, a chameleon, a gypsy, and most of all a madman. He is definitely a creep. He is someone who can be disturbingly random with nothing to lose. Over the course of our long relationship he's sent me material that's made me feel like I'd seen the dark edge of consciousness. He has at least fifteen fully developed personas, each more lurid and macabre than the last. He's a Boogeyman. He is the artist of Osama bin Laden and the curator of the first Tirana Biennale. He perpetrated the greatest hoax the art world never discovered¹. I'm not sure if Marco Lavagetto is even his real name.

Many anagrams and aliases have been washed and tossed. I've accepted the mystery. Lavagetto is the ambassador of an avant-garde that we have avoided identifying because it might lurk within all of us beneath those many layers of control. Marco never had a choice to be an artist. It's a sickness.