

SO MOLTA



MA



objects in the mirror are closer than they appear

Since its foundation, at Base / Progetti per l'arte there have been more than eighty exhibitions including: Sol LeWitt, Marco Bagnoli, Alfredo Pirri, Cesare Pietroiusti, Jan Vercruyssen, Niele Toroni, Michael Galasso, Luca Pancrazzi, John Nixon & Marco Fusinato, Heimo Zobernig, Ingo Springenschmid, Paolo Masi & Pier Luigi Tazzi, Antonio Muntadas, Robert Barry, Luca Vitone, Gino De Dominicis, Liliana Moro, Claude Closky, Remo Salvadori, Pietro Sanguineti, Liam Gillick, Massimo Bartolini, Mario Airò, Eva Marisaldi, Rainer Ganahl, François Morellet, Bernhard Rüdiger, Nedko Solakov e Slava Nakovska, Olaf Nicolai, Giuliano Scabia, Kinkaleri, Steve Piccolo & Gak Sato, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Matt Mullican, Michel Verjux, Elisabetta Benassi, Pedro Cabrita Reis, Pietro Riparbelli, Simone Berti, Jeppe Hein, Gerwald Rockenschau, Jonathan Monk, Peter Kogler, Carsten Nicolai, Surasi Kusulwong, Franz West, Tino Sehgal, Nico Dockx, Grazia Toderi, Armin Linke, Davide Bertocchi, Pierre Bismuth, Olivier Mosset, Stefano Arienti, Erwin Wurm, Thomas Bayle, Hans Schabus, Maurizio Mochetti, Lawrence Weiner, Basetalks(!) (Gum Studio, Brown Project Space, 26cc, Sottobosco, Trastevere 259), Amedeo Martegani, Gianni Caravaggio, Piero Golia, David Tremlett, Franco Vaccari, Radicaltools (Ufo, Gianni Pettena, Archizoom, Ziggurat, Remo Buti, 9999, Superstudio), Koo Jeong A, Christian Jankowski, Giuseppe Gabellone, Martin Creed, Ken Lum, Baseopen (Margherita Moscardini, Francesco Fonassi, Giuseppe Stampone, Giulio Delvé, Gaia Geraci, Marcello Spada, Jacopo Miliani, Riccardo Giacconi, Jaya Cozzani/Marco Andrea Magni/Agostino Osio), Jirí Kovanda, Nicole Miller, Luca Trevisani, Richard Long, Roman Ondak, Ryan Gander, Gerhard Merz, Ian Kiaer who have presented new projects conceived for the space.

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## What is Base?

*Base / Progetti per l'arte* is a non-profit space established in 1998 in Florence, at Via San Niccolò 18r, by a group of artists with a shared idea of artistic practice. They wanted to have a meeting space where they could reflect on contemporary languages, involving and inviting other artists active on the international scene. Base has been in operation for twelve years and has produced over sixty projects designed specifically by the invited artists, including Robert Barry, Olivier Mosset, Jan Vercruyssen, Rainer Ganahl, Carsten Nicolai, Jonathan Monk, Pedro Cabrita Reis, Nedko Solakov, Luca Vitone and Eva Marisaldi. The importance of Base, however, is not just this list of “the right names,” but also lies in its creation of a dimension in which the work and its processes take place outside the contexts of mediation usually present in the world of art.

## Who is Base?

Base is an open organism whose objective, as written in its statute, is to catalyze and provide the free public access to the most interesting artistic themes and the most active and receptive artists on the international scene, by establishing free exchange among all the participants. The group is made up of artists living in Tuscany who organize and coordinate the activities at Base, and although their membership has changed over the years, it has remained true to the original intentions. This non-profit space is unique: it includes artists who use different media of expression and different methods, and belong to three different generations. Maurizio Nannucci has been working with the means of communication and their nature since the end of the 1960s, while Paolo Masi has been working the same amount of time on the limits of gestalt, like geometric abstraction, in a wide variety of solutions. Since the early 1970s Massimo Nannucci has been working on the true/false concept and on the mimesis between artistic and everyday objects. Remo Salvadori is interested in the idea of the encounter — with place, with other, with self; in giving new life to inorganic materials like lead; and in working with color as a material in process. Marco Bagnoli explores the idea of knowledge by comparing science and nature. Mario Airò and Massimo Bartolini, from the generation that emerged in the late 1980s, work on the crossover between various disciplines by means of immaterial and environmental installations, to create a dimension of surprise in which the physical space is directly compared to the imaginary. Since the early 1990s, Paolo Parisi has reflected on the spectator's gaze using the concept of monochromatic painting, by confronting the space of representation with that of experience. The idea of a space open to interaction, with the work at the center and a horizontal organizational structure — as defined by Maurizio Nannucci and Paolo Parisi — distinguishes Base from other similar experiences. Base, with the limited means at its disposal in a world of hyper-communication where it is possible to create a Biennial in any part of the world, has always

concentrated on the crucial moment of encounter between artist and public, artists and artists, artists and context, with which a direct and concrete response to the real situation can be formulated.

Looking at Base's activity from this angle, we can reconstruct the areas of interest that have characterized the last ten years and also make a survey of the most interesting energies in the Tuscany region, involving people and institutions, artists and the public. The founding artists — the initial core of 1998 — were Antonio Catelani, Carlo Guaita, Paolo Masi, Massimo Nannucci, Maurizio Nannucci and Paolo Parisi. Through the years, we have seen the participation of Vittorio Corsini, Fabio Cresci, Daniela De Lorenzo, Andrea Marescalchi, Robert Pettena, Pedro Riz à Porta and Addo Lodovico Trinci. Critics who have worked with Base include Pier Luigi Tazzi, who in a joint project reconstructed the experience of Paolo Masi as a cultural catalyst in Florence since the 1960s, and Sergio Risaliti, who was responsible for the peace project *Let's Give a Chance*. In the last few years, many young artists not necessarily in the group, but who have grown thanks to this fertile dialogue with other artists, have allowed the activity to continue. They include: Enrico Vezzi, Vittorio Cavallini, Silvia Bongiovanni, Yuki Ichihashi and Irina Kholodnaya.

## How has Base been organized?

The artists exhibiting at Base are very different from one another both in terms of generation and artistic evolution. In a certain sense, this variety fully reflects the various interests of the different members of the group. With the Base project, they have made the unique choice of not only showing their own works, but also inviting other artists they feel are complementary to their research. Therefore it is not possible to plot out a linear evolution of the activity over the years, but only a coherent progression of interpretations on how to cope with the problem of the role of art within current society.

The opening event was on September 9, 1998, with a solo show by Sol LeWitt. The work *Red Room* highlighted the emptiness of the architectural box and the presence of the spectator inside it, whose perception was stimulated by a slight variation of the painted red of the background wall. A sinusoidal line parallel to the floor allowed a portion of glossy red to coexist on the same wall with that of a matte version of the same color. The visual experience stimulated by the Conceptual Art theorist imposed an examination of how we see things, which totally exceeded the decorative, aesthetic, and formal dimension of the means used to trigger this process in the observer (surface and color). This first exhibition laid out a constant course of action that continued for the next twelve years. This opened up a consideration of the manner and nature of the language of art, and created a comparison between perceived space and physical space. All the artists have considered one of these two issues by always trying to

stimulate the viewers' perception directly, to make them think about the container/content relationship in a physical sense with respect to that given space, but also on the level of mental process. These operative lines can be used to interpret the experience of Base and take on a character of concrete precision if we consider some specific exhibitions.

The idea of what constitutes a work of art is clearly addressed in Tino Sehgal's project *Instead of allowing some thing to rise up to your face dancing bruce and dan and other things*. It is a living sculpture, the action of a performer who moves, lying on the floor, like a jellyfish trying to move around the space that contains it. This image (the union of two performances by Dan Graham and Bruce Nauman available to the general public only through video documentation) continues the research of the 1970s without nostalgia, focusing on that given space-time moment in which viewers — conscious or unaware pawns — find themselves, asking them to interpret what they have come across seemingly by chance. Rirkrit Tiravanija, on the other hand, asked the same question by directly referring to the people of the local area and transforming the space of Base into the studio of Street TV. Throughout the exhibition, people could come in and “give their opinion,” make programs or broadcast their video material. In this way, the work of art was not something to observe, but something that activated and revealed the moment of coexistence, the relationships between the people present in the artistic space. In other cases, the idea of a work as a way of questioning what makes a space a place of art allows for an examination of the perception of the physical space, or even more, an examination on perception. This happened, for example, with the work *Diagonal Space* by Jeppe Hein, which allowed a visual measurement of space via a zigzagging metal structure that ran from the depth of the space towards the entrance, where water flowed and gave rise to a fountain. In some parts, a “line of fire” (burning alcohol) took the place of the water and initiated a physical involvement — as well as an imaginative one — in the spectator by means of heat and light. Likewise, in his work *Beyond Black*, Gerwald Rockenschau highlighted the physical dimensions of the space while also eliciting the possibility of being able to change it and imagine it in a different way. An MDF panel painted pink crossed the two rooms through the access door, making it impossible to see the whole depth of the space, which was highlighted by a green painted wall and an MDF panel, this time in blue, opposite it. In some cases these two aspects — the consideration of the language of art and the reaction to the perception of the physical/visual space — coincide, as with the work of Matt Mullican. By showing two large flags and a series of computer graphic animations, he shed light on the nature of signs and on their interpretation within a given context. In another example, Niele Toroni, by applying marks with a number 50 brush, not only examined the nature of painting by concretizing the zero degree so that it only represents itself, but also revealed the nature of the architectural box in which the viewers stood, since the painting was applied not on a canvas, but directly onto the walls and floor of the

room. In the same vein, the work of Antonio Muntadas sums up the essence of Base. His work consisted of a striking red membrane that covered the front door and the door between the rooms, making the space inaccessible. By approaching this monochrome diaphragm, visitors could see the illuminated space inside through a series of letters cut into the red surface, which formed the phrase: *La percezione richiede partecipazione* (perception requires participation).

These are just some of the examples of how artists have reacted to the invitation of other artists to participate at the *Base / Progetti per l'arte* space. Despite the wide variety of research projects, there is an investigative red thread that has guided all of the activity of this non-profit space, and shows that its value lies in the simultaneous presence of so many different itineraries and voices. *Base / Progetti per l'arte* is a utopia enacted every day to continuously question the role of the artist in society, and the meaning and purpose of art today.

## **Base: Self-Organized and Transversal A Perfect Place for Collective Spirit and Action**

When Franz West came to the non-profit, artist-run space Base on May 22, 2008 for the opening of his show “Tutti Frutti,” he brought with him a statement he had written. I have cherished this short, precise statement like a precious document, because it laid out Franz’s concept of “Tutti Frutti” as an idea that connected his own, practiced social attitude directly with the collective spirit of *Base / Progetti per l’arte*.

Franz referred to the leitmotif of his group show on the interpersonal, and he focused on the fact that the exchange with many artist friends had a central importance for him and his approach to art. Consequently, “Tutti Frutti” emphasized a social, interactive attitude as a catalyst for art-making. However, Franz positioned himself quite modestly in the background.

He stated: “This exhibition is not curated by me, but the contributions are from the artists, with whom I am in permanent contact. The strategy would not follow the artworks, but it is interpersonal, a presence, the materialization of interconnections of a mental nature.”

### **Collective nature**

For me, this statement was also a wonderful expression of the goal and message of Base. First of all, the autonomous, self-organized project room of Base means a manifestation of the mental and collective nature of like-minded people. This collaborative spirit is perceptible through face-to-face communication with the artists-friends invited by the members of Base to come to Florence to install and show their artworks at Base, Via San Niccolò 18r.

At the time when “Tutti Frutti” was showcased, the founders and promoters of Base could already look back on ten years of uninterrupted, prolific activities. Today, in retrospect, I am highlighting Franz West’s group show from the chronology of so many excellent exhibitions, performances and events that have been shown at Base since 1998. Part of my reason for focusing on Franz West is that the title “Tutti Frutti” reminds me of the “frutti” — or fruits — of the hard work carried out by the Base collective. How has this community space been fruitful and seminal?

### **Resonance Space**

One might immediately think of the large number of artists who have displayed their site-specific works at Base, but what counts is not just the long list of names of internationally renowned artists that Base has brought to Florence. What matters more is the quality of the artworks exhibited by the carefully selected artists from many different countries. Another reason why this artist-run space is unique and outstanding is the long-lasting consensus amongst the Base members,

which underlies the common project and creates strong group cohesion.

I consider the two-room exhibition space an echo chamber (*Resonanzraum*), where an open and widespread dialogue about various contemporary art positions can unfold and expand outward to a broader public. In my experience with Base’s activities over the years, I have also found that the spatial conditions of the venue and the social atmosphere fostered by the members of the collective make every invited artist immediately feel familiar with the place and the Base people. A contagious spirit of community! – this is what Base was founded on.

### **Transversal**

As for the Base exhibition program as a whole, I would characterize it figuratively as transversal, like an oscillating wave across art directions, different art genres and art practices relevant in the international context. Creating such a wave requires a great deal of knowledge, social consciousness, networking, communication, persistence, and above all the ability to see beyond one’s own individual artistic process. To be honest, staying in the background is not usually part of an artist’s profile in this highly competitive society and in an international art system that fosters rivalry.

But in fact, the members of Base have not put on their own shows there. Why? Since the beginning of Base in 1998, the members have consistently acted on their intention to extend the conventional role of the artist, who is usually cast by society as a “soloist.” Base dismantles the conventional model of the artist and creates a space for like-minded people to exchange ideas about art — an open, democratic space without barriers. This unique space carries the founding idea, message and program, like a wave forward to future manifestations / materializations of collective spirit and action.



# Hans Ulrich-Obrist

Lorenzo Bruni: What do you think of non-profit spaces and the role that Base has played as a non-profit space on the contemporary art scene, from the 1990s to the present?

Hans Ulrich-Obrist: It certainly has played a fundamental role. Looking at the situation in England, for example, we created the exhibition “Life Live” with artist-run spaces like City Racing, Bank, Transmission, etc., which were a major force in the English scene and transformed the art world there in the 1990s. These were all spaces organized by artists. In reality, the history of these spaces goes back even farther: if we take into consideration the exhibitions from the early 20th century, a significant number were organized by the artists themselves. You could say that Duchamp’s Surrealist exhibitions, including the spaces, were created by the artist. I strongly believe in this process of self-organization and in the dynamism that these spaces create within the art world. They are spaces created outside of the market strategies of cities, so they allow for great experimentalism. Many initiatives are often born in these spaces, and only later are seen in museums, galleries, fairs, etc. They are very useful places for society, as spaces organized by artists are true art workshops. It’s also interesting to note that these places have contributed to an increase in artistic centers in various cities. When I entered the art world in the late 1980s, there were much fewer art centers than there are today. Consider, for example, the role played by some structures created in the 1990s, like the “Transmission” space that made Glasgow — a suburban city — a true center of art. When I arrived in the city around 1992-93, many artists like Douglas Gordon, Jonathan Monk and Christine Borland became visible thanks to this space, even before large structures presented their work.

L.B.: You have used three important terms: the theme of freedom, the relationship with the public, and the act of creation. Naturally a space like Base in Florence has a different situation than those in other nations. In the 1990s, when artists of different generations began to work, there were no institutions, so they decided to create a meeting place.

H.U.O.: The creation of a meeting place is fundamental. And it is a fundamental element not only for Florence. If we look again at the example of Glasgow, we see that it arrived there through “Transmission” in the early 1990s. In these spaces, not only did they present artistic works, they also invited those artists who inspired the new, emerging artists. These places can therefore be defined as a “space for artists’ artists.”

L.B.: In your opinion, what is the difference between the non-profit spaces created in the 1990s and those from the 1960s, which arose in terms of a different kind of experimentation?

H.U.O.: I think that in the 1990s the advent of the internet established a different means of communication, while the spaces in the 1960s were not as global. Of course they still had an international communication network, but the process was greatly improved in the 1990s, and the spaces we’re talking about became linked to other similar spaces around the world via e-mail and fax. As Boetti always said, artist-run spaces are a global idea. In the 1960s communication was limited, while in the 1990s we find spaces born out of dialogues with all continents.



# Cornelia Lauf

Lorenzo Bruni: What idea did you have of Base when it appeared on the scene in the late 1990s? If you think about Base today, what comes to mind? Also what do you remember about Base when you visited it many years ago?

Cornelia Lauf: Base is a unique proposition on the international art scene. It is an uncompromising reality and that is in large part because of its creation by artists. There is a rigor in the choice of exhibitions which only artists are able to carry out, because the program is a work of art in itself, even if created by a collective. That said, I would be very appreciative if it was stated that the space was born in part, as was Arte Continua in San Gimignano, because of the work I did in Tuscany, starting in the late 1980s. I had moved to the region with my then-husband, Joseph Kosuth, and begun making exhibitions, first as testimony to local figures such as Adolfo Boni, the founder of the Bar Centrale, in San Casciano dei Bagni, and then as a form of economic motor meant to help revitalize things in this sleepy hilltop village. Both Maurizio Nannucci and the young guys from Arte Continua were very cognizant of the eclectic approach that showcasing both international and local artistic production in a quaint setting could have, as they were houseguests, and visitors to the space, as well as, in Maurizio Nannucci's case, a longtime colleague in art of Joseph's. My aim was to create records of the local craft and agricultural traditions and cross-pollinate those with contemporary art.<sup>2)</sup>

L.B.: What do you think in general about the role of non-profit spaces?

C.L.: I had always been struck by the intellectual programs of artists such as Braco Dimitrijevic, Marcel Broodthaers, and Hans Haacke, and was of course of the generation (and professional circle) of Andrea Fraser, Mark Dion, Christian Philip Mueller. But it was Joseph's aesthetic I was most admiring of, and thus I rattled him out of the sphere of language and into the arena of material culture, sometimes with greater effort, sometimes less. He did many of the installations in my space, Camera Oscura, where I featured over 100 exhibitions of art, craft, and agriculture. Base was founded in a way as an antithesis to this anthropological approach, by making a cornucopia of different and great artists. It was the logical antipode and something I could not have done myself, living with one artist (i.e. working for a lot of others). I have always appreciated the eye of Maurizio and think that he and his able crew of colleague artists, figures such as Paolo Parisi, Massimo Bartolini, Mario Airò, Remo Salvadori, Massimo Nannucci, Paolo Masi, Marco Bagnoli and Lorenzo Bruni, curator, chose pearl after pearl to exhibit. Who manages such a good program internationally? Very few places. Some curators have created art meaning over time

with the same rigor. I think of Karola Krauss, then Grässlin, in Braunschweig. Or some of the galleries in Italy. Samangallery. There aren't many that use the inner mechanism of art to define an intellectual program. Without betraying some of the artist's ideologies and peppering the stew with too much variety in order to attract a larger swathe of audience. I tried to do this with Three Star Books, make a real program out of the kindred spirits I had invited, but that died a sad death. Printed Matter used to be guided by a more "inside art" vision, but now is the fabulous mother ship of artist's books, also fine, but a different animal. And then there are places like Jumex, that use the strategies of artists but do not work WITHIN art per se. It's a very delicate thing to be speaking to artists while running an institution. That's what Base has been able to do. Hats off. The international art panorama now is a big dust storm. It has a lot of people in it and a lot of hype and a lot of money. But there are still really very few people who have any real taste, or eye, or sense of where art is going. The market is one thing, and art is another. Some of the best artists are working totally outside the market system and the market is oblivious. Money is very very important today. It wasn't so much a goal in itself once upon a time, though it is an issue for everyone. But as an end goal, it was not the most important criterion. Even great artists now must play the market, in order to have recognition and historical weight, at least in their own time. I have adored many of the installations of Base and just love many of the artists who were selected. I cannot believe that there has not been a movement to make this as important a venue in Florence as the Uffizi. It's so much more refined in the hanging. The best taste in Florence is at Base. As for the word "non-profit," I think it is time to phase it out entirely. I think we should all be totally integrated into the economy we actually are embedded in and not pretend we are above scrabbling for a living. I can't stand the term. I have created a lot of profit for a lot of people. I know how to create value and meaning and it has paid off for many many people, big and small. All the while working for peanuts myself. Basta with the word "non-profit," and all it stands for. Sacrifice. Low wages. Slavery. We are very lucky to live in a democracy and we take a lot of freedoms for granted. I am interested in working within society and giving artists their rightful place in government, and many other types of institutions. If I were to wish something for myself and for Base, besides that we are all adopted from on high, it would be to work with Base again in the future.

# Ilaria Bernardi

*Base / Progetti per l'arte* is a project created by artists for other artists. It was founded in 1998 and its activities are curated, promoted and supported by a collective of artists who live and work in Tuscany, and who foster important aspects of contemporary Italian and international art in Florence. Currently the members of the collective are: Mario Airò, Marco Bagnoli, Massimo Bartolini, Vittorio Cavallini, Yuki Ichihashi, Paolo Masi, Massimo Nannucci, Maurizio Nannucci, Paolo Parisi, Remo Salvadori and Enrico Vezzi.

Base presents exhibitions, projects, discussions and dialogues, proposing different readings and perspectives on what is happening in art, but also in related disciplines. It allows for an exchange of experiences and information that are part of a common heritage from which everyone can draw.

Since 1998, Base has hosted over seventy “interventions,” each presented by a different artist chosen by the collective, and each conceived as a new project linked to a personal interpretation of the exhibition space by the artist. An intervention in this case is the creation of an exhibition consisting of one or more installations, paintings, sculptures, photographs, works on paper or performances, created for the occasion or chosen from existing works, and intended to shape and interpret the space made available by the collective, giving rise to a site-specific operation. The Base facility, consisting of two rooms at Via San Niccolò 18r in Florence, acts as a source of inspiration for each invited artist. Base also has an impact on the region by weaving relationships with important Tuscan cultural institutions that often become sponsors (the first sponsorship was in 1998) and/or off-site hosts for specific events promoted by the collective (the first off-site event took place in 2001).

The following timeline covers the site-specific interventions, talks and gatherings of various kinds between 1988 and 2018 at Base, as well as activities promoted by the collective that were held off-site. For each event, the information is provided in this order: author, title, opening date, closing date, and a descriptive/interpretative text based primarily on the relative press releases and other archival documents.

The statements by the artists alternating with the timeline of images have been gathered by Lorenzo Bruni over the years of Base's activity, through interviews conducted in person, by telephone or via email. They have been scattered randomly throughout this publication to reflect a vital flow still in progress, rather than an archival memoir assembled in retrospect.

# Sol LeWitt

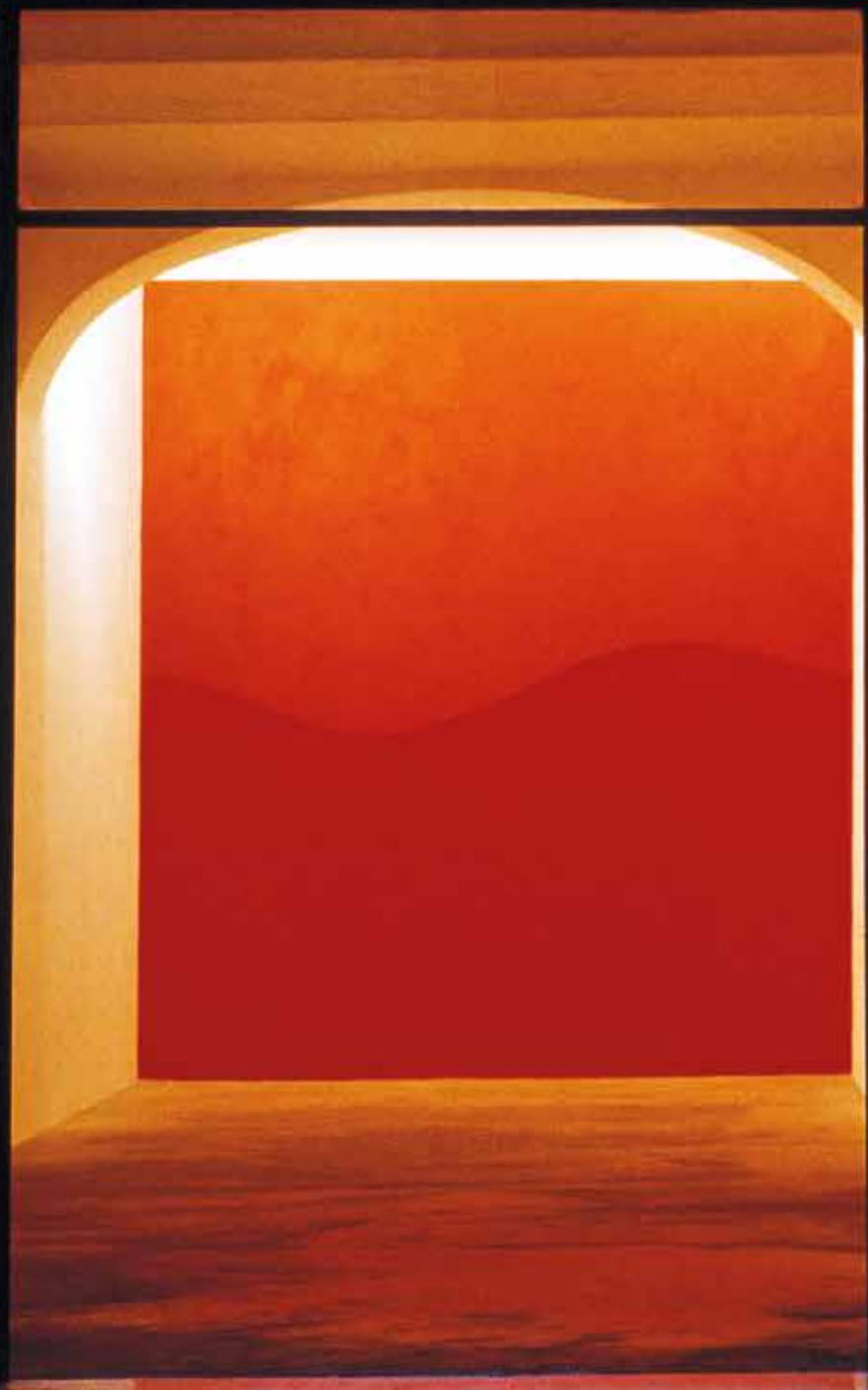
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The installation by Sol LeWitt initiated the activity of Base and highlighted one aspect of its programmatic intent: to present original works specifically created for the new contemporary art space in Florence. In the main room the artist proposed a large wall painting on the entire back wall using two variants of the same red color, one glossy and one matte, separated by a horizontal sinusoid, while the smaller room contained a new series of works on paper depicting colored geometric-spatial structures.

Sol LeWitt is one of the artists who have done the most to challenge, change, and overturn the definition and the conventional rules of artistic practice and its material production. He accomplished this through the abolition of the notions of uniqueness, unrepeatability, and individual skill in manual execution, in favor of an absolute primacy of the idea. In his words, “the idea becomes the instrument that produces art.” This definition is exemplified above all by his famous Wall Drawings. Already from his first artist’s book in 1968, LeWitt began to construct a range of variations of the straight line superimposed in four directions. He then applied this system and developed it on a large scale, redesigning it meticulously on large masonry surfaces. Subsequently, LeWitt incorporated fluid and winding lines in his Wall Drawings, like the sinusoid in the Base installation, obtaining a further rhythmic aspect that seems to curve and fragment the space in a multitude of unpredictable directions.



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# Liam Gillick

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Liam Gillick's project titled *Pain in a Building* was presented at the "BOOM!" exhibition curated by Sergio Risaliti at the Manifattura dei Tabacchi in Florence. Within an exact three-dimensional reconstruction of the space of Base, Gillick proposed a double projection of eighty slides showing the places where he thought about making a film based on his book *Big Conference Centre* (1998). The images were taken over two days in Thamesmead, in Southeast London, one of the satellite neighborhoods built in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Thamesmead is also where Stanley Kubrick shot *A Clockwork Orange* (1971). That film was screened in Great Britain only for a short time and then withdrawn by Kubrick himself for fear that it would encourage violence and vandalism.

At the center of Gillick's research there is always a complex set of extremely topical and deeply correlated themes: the relationship with space, understood not only as physical space but also as political, social and economic space; the centrality of the role of the viewer as an active agent and producer of meaning; the world of communication, and the relationship between the late-capitalist economy, art, and institutions. Since his debut Gillick has positioned the confrontation with the spectator at the center of his work, through the creation of situations in which he critically challenges certain parameters linked to the use of art, to the functioning of the institutions entrusted with it, and to the creation and transmission of the concept of value.









# Rirkrit Tiravanija

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[Any (TV.)]

*Qualsiasi (TV)* was a “telestreet” (free TV station) broadcast by Base using an antenna positioned for this purpose. Created by Rirkrit Tiravanija, it came out of his collaboration with the students of the visual arts course of the School of Design and Arts of IUAV (University of Venice), who conceived the planning of the programming.

Starting on June 26, viewers could watch the broadcasts at Base or on any television tuned to the proper frequency. In the month that followed, the programming continued on a round-the-clock schedule and was carried out not only by the IUAV students, but also thanks to the collaboration of the inhabitants of the local neighborhood in Florence.







The neon sign *Qualsiasi (TV)* placed over the entrance door, on the other hand, was the result of Tiravanija's collaboration with Maurizio Nannucci. Telestreet represented a new frontier for communication, since these broadcasts made legal use of the frequencies of official TV channels, thereby creating areas of free communication in which to weave a network of constructive relationships. Granting visibility to the reality of individuals and of a specific place (in this case Base and the San Niccolò neighborhood), a social experience

becomes universal, since it can be taken and recreated anywhere, covering the largest area possible.

*Qualsiasi (TV)* investigated the possibility of having (any) sort of communication from the ground up, which would not be subject to official communications media or forced to accept them. It was therefore in line with Tiravanija's research, since he sees each of his works a laboratory in which the boundaries between public and private space are blurred and the focus is on human relations and cultural exchange.



# Grazia Toderi

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(Fantasy/Imagination)

During Grazia Toderi's exhibition, the Base space was transformed into a precious treasure trove, allowing for an unprecedented perception of the exhibition space and its surrounding context, namely the city of Florence. Toderi presented *Fantasia*: a video, a sort of mirage or sunken Atlantis observed from above through a pool of water, or perhaps from under the water. The question underlying *Fantasia* is precisely which of the two sides or points of view is the correct one. Actually both are correct, but also neither, because the one constant in this artist's research is the determination to do away with the force of gravity and to position herself and viewers as if they were on another planet. It is only as both horizons materialize that one can find the truth of the vision. As a result, *Fantasia* does not represent a map of the city of Florence, nor a panoramic snapshot of it, but makes its temporal materialization before our eyes become concrete: the moment of a transformation in progress. It is a dance, a mirage; precisely, a fantasy.

Grazia Toderi's videos of cities seen from the air have been inspired by Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* and her desire to create an overlapping relationship between the earth (with its lights) and the sky (with its stars). Video is one of the artist's preferred media for research, because through it she can reflect on the fictional power of technology to increase our capacity for invention and vision.





Ever So Much /  
Mai così tanto

SO MUCH

# Lawrence Weiner

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Lawrence Weiner's participation at Base was also his first solo show in Florence and Tuscany. On the left wall of the first room he wrote the exhibition's title in large pre-printed letters (in English and Italian), while on the right wall he drew an equation that could not be solved. In the second room, on the other hand, he intervened on a wall using two curved blue marks.

Weiner is convinced of the predominance of the idea over the actual making of a work of art, and through his work he investigates the system through which the visitor perceives and interprets the artist's thought. This offers a new definition of this relationship, or as he puts it, "a common universal possibility of access." To do this, he carries out his site-specific interventions in terms of bilingual statements, i.e. statements in English and their translation into the language of the place where they are being shown.

Words, in terms of their meaning, are more relevant to him than the object itself, and their interpretation as artwork is entrusted to the observer. Weiner uses language as a material, opening his works to multiple levels of interpretation and manifesting their presence through the communicative force expressed intrinsically by the fact that they carry meaning.

If it is true that the artist's intentions may remain hidden from the viewer, the latter is left free to interpret a work as he or she desires. The title of the project at Base, *Ever So Much/Mai Così Tanto*, is simply an enigma that leaves the possibility of interpretation open to visitors.





# Basetalks(!)

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Basealks(!) consisted of a series of meetings with Italian and international independent non-profit associations. The first cycle included four talks that took place within Lawrence Weiner's exhibition *Ever So Much/Mai Così Tanto* which was underway at Base. Each talk involved one Italian association: Gum Studio in Carrara-Turin; Brown Project Space in Milan; 26cc in Rome; Sottobosco in Venice. The talks were to be the first in a series, involving the collaboration of other independent Italian and foreign non-profit spaces trying to defend themselves against the intrusion of the market and the coercion of global thought. The encounters of Basetalks(!) set out to trigger a new debate and new reflections regarding the role of art within the society in which it is produced, and especially its rights and duties in relation to the viewer.

The program of the first cycle of talks, in 2012, included:

- March 23: 26cc
- March 30: Gum Studio
- April 13: Brown Project Space
- April 20: Sottobosco

Initially there was to be a fifth talk, held on April 27, with Trastevere 259 from Rome, but it was canceled.





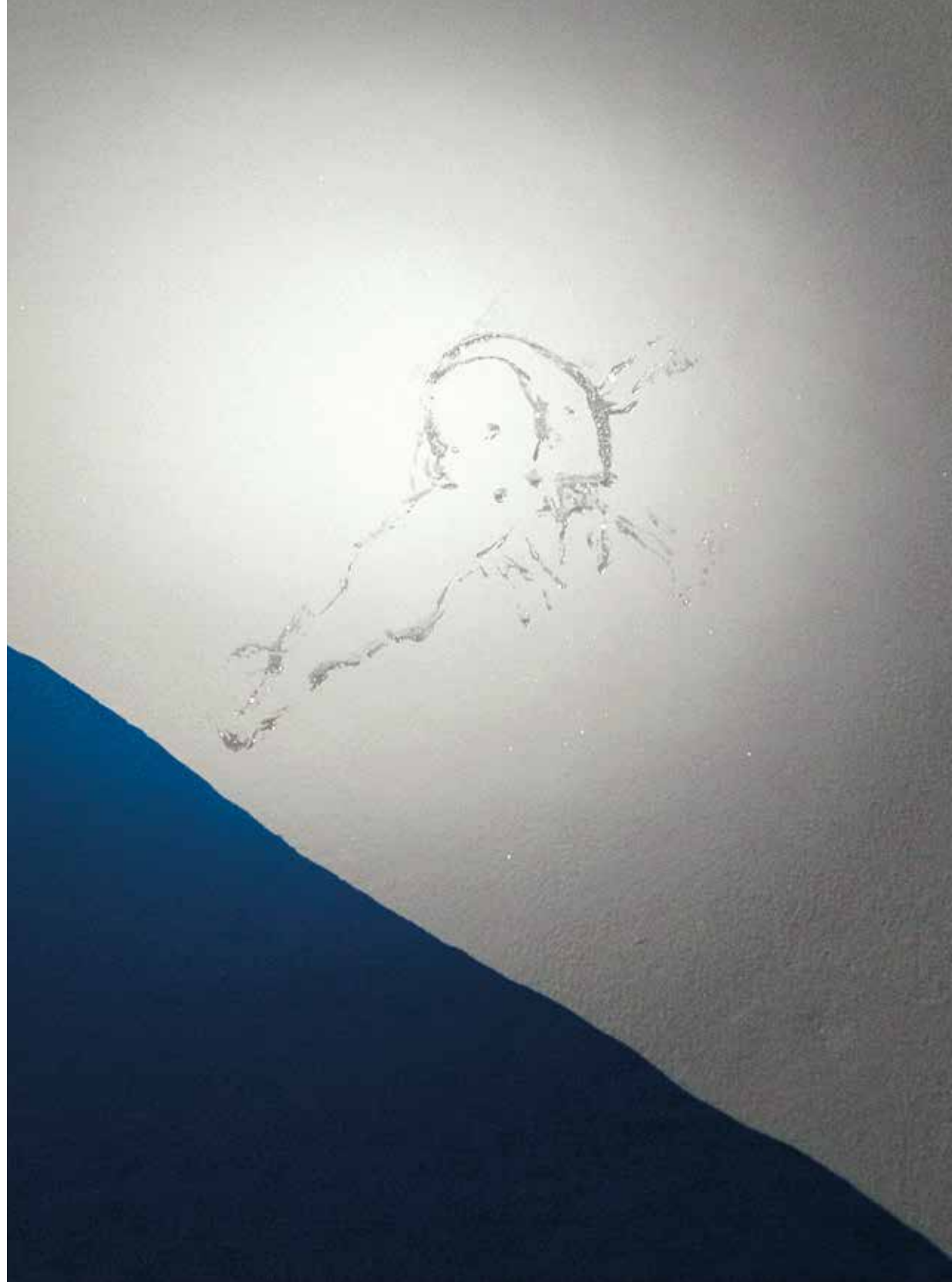
Void within unlimited freedom

# Koo Jeong A

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*Void within unlimited freedom / Vuoto dentro una liberta illimitata* is the title of a work by Koo Jeong A, who set out to discover the city of Florence and the Base space during a short one-week residence, just prior to the opening. The temporal fragment in question — which is the real subject of the project — is evoked within the exhibition space through minimal and emotionally engaging interventions. The artist made the lower part of the walls of both rooms blue and traced a drawing on one of the walls. She was not interested in creating an object for its own sake, but set out to open a collective discussion on the value and meaning of paying attention to everyday life, and the importance of encounters in the era of the global village.





The clues that reveal the kind of process activated by the exhibition consist of a list of wishes to investigate and experience in person: “Visit the convent of San Marco; meet the Base artists; make a book/diary of the experience; rethink the relationship with the East; look at the Arno River; create rubber stamps to print a series of drawings; see what happens...” The concept of the “ordinary” is constantly overturned and questioned by the artist, as happens in the drawing *irkutsk*, which she made for the invitations to the exhibit. The drawing links back to the stereotypical imagery of manga comics, but more importantly it investigates body language, which is assigned less importance today, when interpersonal communications occur mostly on an immaterial level.



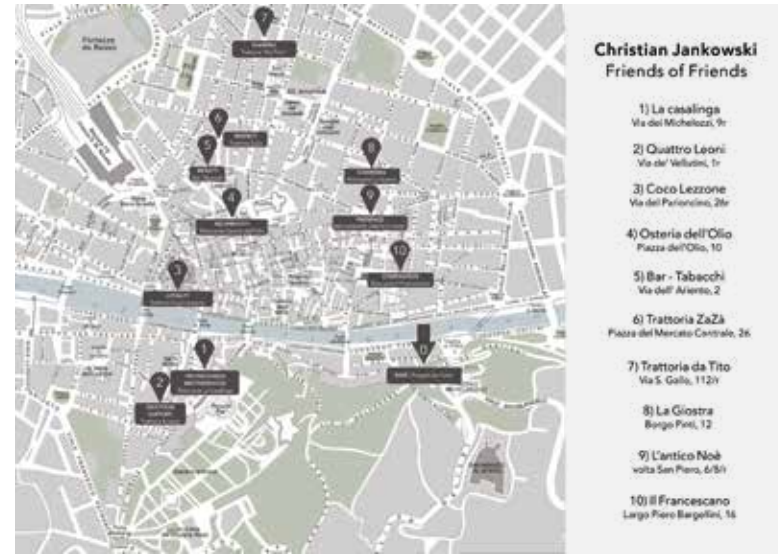
# Christian Jankowski

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In the first room of Base, Christian Jankowski hung a neon “no-profit” sign from the ceiling, and wrote on the walls about how the making of the sign had been possible. The ideals evoked by the “no-profit” sign become the focus of a collective analysis through its transformation into an object (neon) and a story (the writing on the wall). Jankowski shifted attention from the physical space of Base to its underlying economic-organizational mechanisms (such as the self-taxation of the collective of artists to help sustain its existence, and their often hidden organizational dynamics). The aim was to compare these mechanisms of the collective with those of the current intangible economy of new finance, and with the proliferation of virtual friendships through social networks.

In the second room, the work *friends to friends* was displayed. The wall presented a map of Florence and a series of photographs that together with a book of photographs placed on a stand in the middle of the room showed images of a happening the artist created in taverns and restaurants in Florence. In these restaurants, Jankowski photographed himself with the photographs of the famous people one often sees on the walls of such venues, recreating their exact poses and inserting himself as a sort of mirror image. Each photograph was accompanied by a piece of paper on which he had written, “what is the quality of a good friend?” His aim was to investigate celebrity and friendship in the era of the global village, but also to suggest the work of art and the space of art as a means to reexamine their role in society.





# Roman Ondak

This was the first exhibition by Roman Ondak in Florence. The artist focused on the glass door and window of Base, both of which face the street. These two elements strongly influence the space's character, making it visually accessible to the observer from outside to inside, and vice versa, while also keeping it at a safe distance beyond the glass. The artist explains that the title derives from the phrase "Objects in the Mirror are Closer Than They Appear," which is placed by law on the wing mirrors of cars in certain countries. The safety warning urges the driver to pay attention to the fact that such a convex mirror makes the objects reflected in it look smaller." *Objects in the Mirror* confirms the artist's interest in creating new experiences with which to shift audience attention toward the ways of discovering, perceiving and practicing reality, as well as the experience of art. Since the 1990s Ondak has created temporary interventions that can turn into spontaneous happenings through the ideas of relocation, representation and duplication of experience, which allow him to broaden the viewer's attention to the gestures of everyday life in a world made global by the quantity and speed of electronic communications.







Objects in the mirror are closer than they appear.

# Ryan Gander

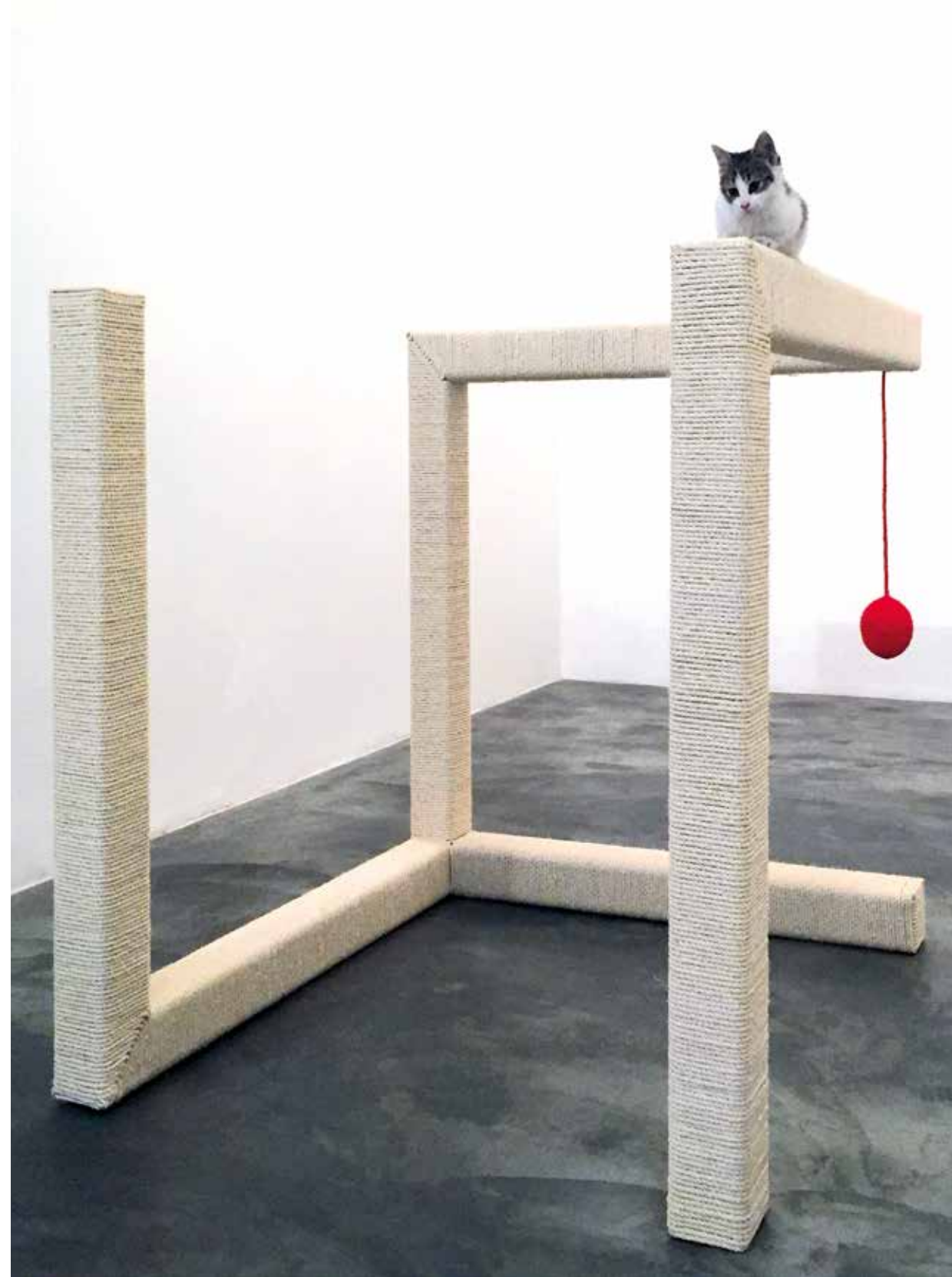
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As frequently happens with Gander's works, the title immediately appears as an unsettling call that forces the viewer to question who has declared it, to whom, and especially in what context.

The two works exhibited at Base, one in the center of each room, took their cue from the sculptures of the *Incomplete Open Cubes* series by Sol LeWitt. Gander provides the following anecdote, reported by his gallerist Nicholas Logsdail, who in turn had heard it from Dan Graham: "Sol made a climbing post structure for his cat and someone came around to his apartment and said 'this is great work, Sol!' That's how they were made, by accident. I love the story because it speaks of accidental creativity, and the consequences of life! Art is all around us, but it is only acknowledged when it has been identified."

On the evening of the opening some cats, on hand thanks to the association "A.Mici Mie!" of Siena, interacted with Gander's sculptures, assigning them the same function that was initially envisioned by LeWitt, according to this anecdote.

The minimal matrix of Gander's sculptures measures, transforms, sensitizes and characterizes the exhibition space, and through the relationship with the history of art and the function it borrowed for the exhibition, it aimed at producing narratives that have been or will be possible. *Good Heart* therefore set out to create a democratic and horizontal debate on art as well as a temporal short-circuit, given that the activity of Base began in 1998 precisely with a project by Sol LeWitt.







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Base/Progetti per l'arte is an idea by artists for artists. Base is a unique place for art practice in Italy. The activity, begun in 1998, is curated by a collective of artists who live and work in Tuscany, addressing some of the most interesting aspects of art today in Florence. Base is a dialogue on the contemporary, open to an international discourse. It offers a space open to the most significant aspects of art today, Italian and international, in a dialectic of different signs and languages. Base is supported by a group of artists who alternate in the conduct of the activities, and it aims to engage a larger number of artists, scholars, collectors and friends in a form of participation and active support. Base therefore provides a necessary place of exchange of experiences and information, becoming part of a common heritage available to all. The space presents exhibitions, projects, discussions and dialogues suggesting new interpretations and perspectives on what is most interesting in art and related fields. Currently the Base artist collective is composed of: Mario Airò, Marco Bagnoli, Massimo Bartolini, Vittorio Cavallini, Yuki Ichihashi, Paolo Masi, Massimo Nannucci, Maurizio Nannucci, Paolo Parisi, Remo Salvadori, Enrico Vezzi. Since 1998, Base/Progetti per l'arte has been promoted and supported by the artists and coordinated by Lorenzo Bruni.



