Culture does not begin as play, and it does not begin from play. It begins in play.

Commencing this exploration of the art of Carlo Galli (Pietrasanta, Italy, 1981) with the words of Johan Huizinga taken from his well-known book Homo Ludens is, without a doubt, a declaration of intent. Galli desecularizes the forbidden, he ousted from its antiquated historical throne and he adds a playful, though not necessarily real, connotation to it as if it were a child's game. He speaks to us frankly and with a trace of severity, yet resorts to a vibrantly-coloured, seductive, hypnotic and strategic scenography; eliciting a smile from the spectator thanks to his use of humour; or employing devices socially (re)cognized as being popular on which to build a strong connection with his audience. Similarly, he encourages us to scrutinize and take the hegemonic processes inundating our society apart, and, moreover, he provides us with tools, or at least new paths, for interpreting, and subsequently, disarticulating the moral and cultural boundaries that shape us as individuals.

Getting to the bottom of his fascination for play and theatricality proves to be highly revealing. His first creative steps, while he was still a student at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Carrara (Italy), were marked by the Carnevale di Viareggio, which he took part in for a number of years by making enormous papier-mâché set designs, employing strident colour schemes and showing a proclivity for satirical and grotesque scenes. Taken all together it had an important influence on his artistic output, seamlessly interweaving the sacred and the profane whilst, moreover, retaining an underlying coherency in his installations and volumes, even when it came to creating simulated three-dimensional visual effects in his two-dimensional works. It is worth mentioning, as a continuation of this transmission of the legacy of set designs, that from the onset he was interested in carrying out analyses and interventions on uninhabited or ruined city spaces, as places already possessing a predesigned atmosphere. It is relevant to draw attention to his artistic activity in these early stages, which he subsequently disengaged himself from completely, because the process of change was reflected in the growing maturity of his work, paving the way for greater consistency, and allowing his language as an artist to cease being local and to attain a more global interpretation.

This global language accessible to all kinds of audiences, regardless of place of origin, sex or age, is primarily noticeable in Galli's choice of stock materials, which in themselves contribute to the message the Italian artist seeks to convey. A surveillance camera, barricade tape and plastic barrier fences are laid out as elements typical of, and applicable to, State-exercised control. The collective imaginary rapidly identifies the meaning of these repressive objects, and this consequently leads to perplexity when they are placed in unusual spaces or arranged in unconventional ways. Carlo Galli plays on this, on the cracks that are opened up by confusion, especially if we bear in mind that the aforesaid objects ironically possess double, contradictory uses: being designed for control but also for protection.

Semantic and chromatic fluctuations, geometries, pattern-like repetitions, allusions to Norman Wilkinson-style dazzle camouflage, humour, cultural (re)mixes, trompe l’œils and architectural scale. Carlo Galli bewitches and entices his audience with striking forms and colours only to continue by slapping them across the face with hard facts. He is able to fully capture the violent, negative charge oozing from objects, to dismantle and put them back together with new meaning, thus transforming them into devices of sensorial delight and, subsequently, of intellectual delight. All the above, yet always mindful that culture is no more (nor less) than a game.

Written by Adonay Bermúdez
CV

NAME: Carlo Galli; GENDER: Male; NATIONALITY: Italian; WEB: carlogalli.it; INSTAGRAM: carlogalli81

BIOGRAPHY
1981 Born in Pietrasanta (ITA)
2019 Lives and works in Milan (ITA).

EDUCATION
2008 Post degree specialization course (Sculpture), Carrara (ITA).
2005 University degree, Accademia di Belle Arti, Carrara (ITA).

SOLO EXHIBITION
2019 ‘Out of order’ Question Mark, Milan (ITA)
2018 ‘I JO ME’, Sehsaal, Wien (AU)
2015 ‘I sleep well’ AdhocPAD, Wien (AU)

GROUP EXHIBITIONS
2018 Tape Art convention, Berlin (DE); ‘Qui dove tu vivi’ Casa Murabito, Casoli (ITA); Bau Out GAMC, Viareggio (ITA)
2017 Sincerity, SHARE, Torino (ITA). ‘La connovizione emocional’ Espacio Dörffi, Lanzarorte (ESP); ‘Vetrina’ Pietrasanta (ITA)
2016 Dress Codex GAMC Viareggio (ITA); ‘House Guests’ SHARE, Torino (ITA)
2015 ‘Cattivi natali’ Dadaboom, Viareggio (ITA); ‘Last Grexit to Brooklyn’ Centotto Gallery, New York (USA); ‘Trasgressioni’ Dadaboom ,Viareggio (ITA).
2014 ‘From sea to you’ POCA gallery, Bilbao (ESP); ‘BRIDGED’ Bag Factory, Johannesburg (ZA); ‘BAU3D’ GAMC, Viareggio (ITA); FuoriCorso, Villa Bonaparte, Viareggio (ITA); ‘Queste strada è anche la mia’ Bar Irene, Viareggio (ITA).
2013; ‘Insetti Inetti’ EXP, Carrara (ITA); ‘Inconvenzional-mente’ Palazzo Paolina Bonaparte (ITA); Marble Rumble, EXP, Carrara (ITA); Bau Dieci GAMC, Viareggio (ITA); ‘OVOQUADRO’ Palazzo Ducale, Massa (ITA
2012 ‘Il museo illuminato’ GAMC, Viareggio (ITA); ‘Bau nove’ GAMC,Viareggio (ITA); ‘TRANSITO’ Studio37, Las Palmas, (ESP).
2011 ‘Pimp mi casa’ Viareggio (ITA);
2010 ‘Sculture in Giardino’ Ristorante Lombardi, Torre del Lago Puccini (ITA); ‘Un quadro per rinascere’ GAMC, Viareggio (ITA); ‘Exteriors’ SMS. (ITA); ‘Pimp my mary’ Carrara, (ITA).
WORKS / PROJECTS / RESIDENCIES / FESTIVAL
2019 Art residency Studio17 Gran Canaria (ESP); ‘Don’t forget to go home’ Millesuoni collective, Mian (ITA); ‘Binario10’ Via Ponchielli memorial Viareggio (ITA).
2018 Kulturschiene, Salzburg (AU)
2017 Residency program Espacio Dörffi; Tape of meditation, curated by Lorenzo Mazza, Grimm Lab, Viareggio (ITA).
2016 Make Munich Fair, Monaco (DE)
2015 Art residency (John Silvis - Alternate access) New York (USA); Art residency in AdohcPAD, Wien (AU). Schmiede, Salzburg (AU)
2014 Art residency in Bag Factory, Johannesburg (ZA); HENROUX, Pietrasanta (ITA); ‘Schmiede’ Salzburg (AU)
2011 DRAWING(A)LIVE festival. L21, Viareggio, (ITA).
2010 SLAM! L21, Viareggio (ITA).
2009 Humanitarian project ‘Quadro ONU/PNUD’, Havana (C); Kunstwollen L21, Viareggio (ITA).
2008 Scenography for GE (general electric) Palazzo Congressi Firenze (ITA).
2000/2003 Arnaldo Galli assistant, Viareggio (ITA)

PUBLICATIONS
Street Art guide Vienna, Wien (AU)
ART (inter) Paul D'agostino New York (USA)
Los Dictadores, Editorial Vortex (ESP)
Lanzarote Arte y Temporalidad, Adonay Bermudez (ESP)
Las instalaciones urbana de Carlo Galli JUXTAPOZ LATINO AMERICA
Carlo Galli y el robo de lo espacio publico, diariodelanzarote;
3D walls on tuscany, muralismomorte
SELECTED WORKS
'Barrier flowers', 2017. 180 circular pieces cut out from orange plastic barrier. BAU Project, Viareggio
'I sleep well', 2015. Signal tape on wall. ADHOCpad, Vienna