

Rossella Biscotti
Press release solo-show *You have to be focused*

The works of Rossella Biscotti are always a reflection on narration, on the object of the narration that is always on the edge between what we can consider true or false and on the role of the subject in the interpretation of historical facts. In the project *You have to be focused*, the artist has chosen a character from the fight against the American Mafia, as subject for a reflection on the idea of memory and collective identity. The photographs, the silk-screens, the video, the historical audio documents and the set furniture which was created by the artist herself, are elements through which only the spectator can give a partial meaning, from time to time. They are elements to be used in recreating a scene. The only truth of the events is built by the presence of the spectator in the exhibition space, rendering everything in a present dimension, retracing in this way also the process of the artist.

The project *You have to be focused* revolves around the figure of Joseph D. Pistone (Pennsylvania, 1939), who in the 1970's and 80's worked undercover as an FBI agent within the Bonanno and Colombo New York crime families, under the false identity of Donnie Brasco. The film *Donnie Brasco*, directed by Mike Newell and released in 1997 was based on the real life of Joseph Pistone. The teaser for the film says it is based on a true story, and to most of the public the character Donnie Brasco is automatically linked with Johnny Depp's face. To this day, and since 1982 when his work led to the largest number of criminal arrests in the history of the Italian-American mafia - Joseph Pistone has been living incognito, under special surveillance. Rossella Biscotti's project - includes a video installation, photographs, historical documents and new products from her own research - allows Joseph Pistone to regain the possibility to speak and therefore, to exist. [...] What difference is there between being fooled and a story told well to the point where it is accepted as the official version by everyone? Does the concept of being tricked or of a lie still exist today? Did it ever exist? And if so, what is the degree of the relationship between what we consider to be reality and fiction? These are the questions that the artist deals with through Pistone's real life and his fictional one to arrive at a more in depth reflection regarding the mechanisms with which we build and nourish our personal identity compared to the one that we believe is the collective consciousness. It is for this reason that in dealing with Pistone, Biscotti first wanted to have a look at the language of film noir, which is focused on analyzing the human conditions that the protagonist moves through, more than the cause and effect of particular crimes. In the course of her research, the strongest and most evident aspect is in fact Pistone's life story, weaved into the series of Biscotti's attempts to connect herself with "him". An ulterior attempt is made with this project to allow the spectator to develop his own autonomous point of view and story regarding this question. It is a project about our needs to be the narrator.

Lorenzo Bruni

Biography Rossella Biscotti.

Rossella Biscotti (Molfetta, Italy, 1978; lives and works in Rotterdam, Holland) is famous for her videos regarding the traces of lives of others, that are usually anonymous in history. They are sources that stimulate a reflection on the situation of (collective and personal) identity and memory, in present time.

Her recent exhibitions include the solo show *The Undercover man*, Wilfried Lentz gallery, Rotterdam (NL), *You have to be focused*, a solo show in the former church of San Matteo, Lucca for the prometeogallery (IT), the site-specific project for the Museion in Bolzano/Bozen (IT), 2008; *Cabinet of imagination*, Netwerk, Aalst (BE), 2008; *Looking for the Border*, De Garage, Mechelen / Cultuurcentrum Strombeek (BE), 2008; *Les Rencontres Internationales, Jeu de Paume*, Paris (FR) / National Museum Reina Sofia, Madrid (ES), 2008; the final show of the residency program Premio NY, Italian Academy at Columbia University, NY, (USA), 2007; *Nessuna paura*, Centre for Contemporary Art Luigi Pecci, Prato (IT), 2007; *Work_show in progress*, Galleria Civica di Trento (IT), 2007; *12th Biennial of Moving Images*, Centre pour l'image contemporaine, Saint-Gervais, Geneva (ZW), 2007; *Geografie*, Via Nuova arte contemporanea, Florence (IT), 2007; *Video_Report*, GAM, Monfalcone (IT), 2006; *Sense and Sensitivity*, TENT Rotterdam Center for the Arts, Rotterdam (NL), 2006; *Adam*, Smart Project Space, Amsterdam (NL), 2005; *Padiglione Italia-Out of Biennale*, Trevi Flash Art Museum, Trevi (IT), 2004; *Prototipi 03*, Fondazione Adriano Olivetti, Roma (IT), 2003; *Tracce di un seminario*, Viafarini/CareOf, Milano (IT) 2001.