

BID

Biennale Internazionale Donna

We live in a time that constantly demands to be named. In the age of clusterisation, where it becomes more important for an algorithm to recognise what is being discussed than to attempt to understand the present firsthand, every transformation seems to require a word to contain it, every crisis a term to render it intelligible. When categories begin to waver, the temptation is to rigidify them: to use words not to open thought, but to stabilise it.

Every name is a container, wrote Anselm Strauss in *Mirrors and Masks*. But not all names contain in the same way. Some words, more than others, are burdened with what they are asked to be and, at the very moment they are uttered, they already begin to prescribe. *Woman* is one of them.

Quite simply, one only has to open a dictionary to grasp how the word *woman* functions as a body under pressure, upon which — among other things — roles, expectations, promises and blame are deposited, while the world around changes shape. A sensitive surface, *woman* absorbs and reflects collective desires, political nostalgias and social fears. It is called upon to hold together what is fractured and, when these projections are left unquestioned and assumed as necessary, they end up containing and closing off a field of possibility that could otherwise expand, exceed, and never cease to transform.

Born in Trieste, the Biennale Internazionale Donna returns every two years as a critical dispositif. By invoking in its very name a word already charged with meaning, the Biennale does not stabilise it, but places it under tension: to observe how it returns, how it operates, and upon which bodies it insists. Within this tension, BID works to subtract the word from the projections that confine it, reopening possibilities of meaning, experience and transformation. Not always in the same way. Not always on the same bodies.

BID does not assume *woman* as a natural category nor as a closed identity, but as a cultural universe and a field of sensibility. Within this framework, the binary distinction between genders is not simply overcome, but counter-operated: in its very obsolescence, it reveals its banality. It is from this position that the Biennale operates through contrast, distancing itself from hegemonic definitions and activating narratives capable of disarticulating what appears as given.

Woman, in fact, traverses time like an echo: at times contracting, at others expanding, accumulating meaning. BID is born within this echo and invites resistance: not through fixing meanings, but by listening to their distortions and observing, each time anew, *where we stand with the flowers*.

It is not ask who is *woman*, but what becomes possible when this word ceases to function as a descriptive category and is taken up as a critical tool. From this instability, an expanded field opens up, and each edition of BID takes shape as a situated exercise in epistemological expansion: a moment to interrogate, from within its own historical present, what can and must be questioned, and what emerges as necessary to imagine or render visible. Rather than offering answers, BID makes space for practices and categories that remain in continuous becoming.