

PRESS RELEASE

*Bas Jan Ader. Tra due mondi*  
curated by Javier Hontoria

Villa delle Rose (via Saragozza 228/230 - Bologna)  
January 24 – March 17, 2013

*Bas Jan Ader. Tra due mondi* is the first retrospective dedicated to Bas Jan Ader in Italy, curated by Javier Hontoria and organised by **MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna (Istituzione Bologna Musei)**.

The title alludes to the condition of being constantly in transit, between the Old and New World, between the subjectivity inherent to the romantic drift and cold impersonality of Conceptual Art, between the extreme rationalism of Mondrian and the vibrant absurdity of slapstick comedy.

The legendary aspects distinguishing Bas Jan Ader life and work and the emblematic value of many of his works have made him a key figure in contemporary art. Born in 1942 near Groningen in the Netherlands, in 1975 he was lost at sea while attempting to reach Ireland aboard a small 4-metre-long boat. He left the Massachusetts coast for a voyage that was to have been part of his project *In search of the miraculous*.

The exhibition explores the relationship between man and nature, interpreted by Ader from a Romantic viewpoint; it also focuses on the concept of melancholy, one that finds its roots in the European Renaissance thinking, in Dürer and in humanist Florentine thinking of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Simultaneously, it features constant references to his fellow countryman Piet Mondrian while giving shape to an existentialist drive. It is under this light that his famous “falls” emerge, a topic that stands close to the legacy of authors like Albert Camus or Samuel Beckett, the American slapstick comedy of the 1920's and the work of those that took failure and the absurd as their central themes. Ader is also one of the most original figures to have re-drafted the essential features of Conceptual Art, thrusting aside its formal rigour in favour of a more personal and evocative language.

*Bas Jan Ader. Tra due mondi* analyses the main Ader's phases as an artist and features six thematic sections.

***Melancholy and Romanticism***

Bas Jan Ader's affinity to some of the postulates of the Romantic tradition

is a recurring theme in his career. For example, the sense of solitary subjectiveness of the individual within the immeasurable and incomprehensible context of nature is clearly expressed in *Farewell to faraway friends*, a work that evokes Caspar David Friedrich's *Monk by the sea*. Ader was also interested in *melancholia*, a mental state that was deeply examined by the Neoplatonic scholars of 15<sup>th</sup> century Florence and which clearly emerges in *The artist as consumer of extreme comfort*, a photograph that echoes Dürer's famous print, *Melancholia I*.

#### ***How to disappear completely***

Bas Jan Ader always worked in solitude. However, despite being a reserved and elusive character, he always stood at the very centre of every work. This section presents some works in which the artist explored the duality of presence/absence, a recurring motif throughout his oeuvre. The film *Nightfall* and the photographs of *(Untitled) Tea Party* are good examples of this interest.

#### ***Mondrian's legacy***

As a young artist, Bas Jan Ader studied Mondrian in depth. Mondrian completely rejected diagonal lines in a radical attempt to rationalise ideas and reality. This theme was picked up by Ader in some of his most famous "falls": *Broken fall (geometric)*, *Westkapelle*, *Holland* shows the artist falling flat on the ground after a diagonal trajectory, with the Westkapelle lighthouse in the background. Through the *falls* related to Mondrian, Ader addresses the failure of the modernist project of which the Dutch master was a leading figure.

#### ***Language and theatre***

Language was one of the most important and most widely used strategies in the 1960s in both Europe and the United States. Many artists interpreted it from a tautological and self-referential point of view, making the word the subject/object of their works. Bas Jan Ader took the opposite point of view, using language subjectively to convey his personal anxieties. A good example is his widely-acclaimed *Please don't leave me*, a phrase which was written on a wall, then photographed and finally erased.

#### ***I'm too sad to tell you***

Considered by many to be one of Bas Jan Ader's most emblematic work, *I'm too sad to tell you* is as magnetic as it is enigmatic. The film shows the artist in the foreground, crying in front of the camera. We do not know why he is crying, and the title of the work itself clearly expresses his intention to hide his reasons. It is one of the works that best represents Ader's personal and poetic contribution to Conceptual Art.

*Falling*

The existentialist and simultaneously comic mood typifying Bas Jan Ader's spirit finds its clearest expression in his "falls". The three films screened here - *Broken fall (organic)*, *Amsterdamse Bos, Holland*; *Fall I, Los Angeles*; *Fall II Amsterdam* - only depict Bas Jan Ader falling, becoming the visual depictions of the very concept of falling, without any reference to causes and consequences. As has been often described, these films evoke the fall of the hero in Greek tragedy and, at the same time, recall the slapstick of Keaton and Chaplin.

The documentary film *Here is Always Somewhere Else* directed by **Rene Daalder** and a selection of books and catalogues conclude the exhibition path. The documentary is a unique and original version filmed by Dutch filmmaker Rene Daalder in 2007 about the life and fate of fellow countryman Bas Jan Ader. It aims to explore the concept of gravity and Ader's attachment to the romantic aesthetic as essential features of his work. Daalder turns to testimonies by important artists who were close to Ader during his life and also of those who have been influenced by his unique approach to artmaking, such as Ger van Elk, his all time friend, and Tacita Dean, one of the outstanding artists of our time.

*Bas Jan Ader. Tra due mondi* is organised by MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna in collaboration with Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, with the support of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Rome and KLM.

Special thanks to Mary Sue Ader-Andersen – Bas Jan Ader Estate.

The exhibition is part of **ART CITY Bologna 2013**, the cultural programme promoted by **Comune di Bologna** and **BolognaFiere** on the occasion of **Arte Fiera 2013**.

The Italian edition of the catalogue *Bas Jan Ader. Please don't leave me* (Edizioni MAMbo in collaboration with Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen) with text by Erik Beenker, Tacita Dean, Elbrig de Groot, Doede Hardeman, Jörg Heiser, Javier Hontoria and Gianfranco Maraniello will be available during the exhibition.

**MAMbo Education department** organises guided visits to *Bas Jan Ader. Tra due mondi*.

Information: ph. +39 051 6496628/611 – [mamboedu@comune.bologna.it](mailto:mamboedu@comune.bologna.it).

**For further information**

[www.mambo-bologna.org](http://www.mambo-bologna.org)

The complete programme of **ART CITY Bologna 2013** is available on  
[www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/cultura/](http://www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/cultura/)

**Press**

**MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna – Press Office**

Elisa Maria Cerra – Silvia Tonelli

Ph. 051 6496653 – 608 – [ufficiostampamambo@comune.bologna.it](mailto:ufficiostampamambo@comune.bologna.it)

**Comune di Bologna – Press Office**

Raffaella Grimaudo

Ph. 051 2194664 – [ufficiostampa@comune.bologna.it](mailto:ufficiostampa@comune.bologna.it)

The Bas Jan Ader exhibition press kit is available on:

<http://www.mambo-bologna.org/en/ufficiostampa/cartellestampa/>

## *Bas Jan Ader. Tra due mondi*

The exhibition is part of



Promoted by

On the occasion of



COMUNE DI BOLOGNA



The exhibition is supported by



Kingdom of the Netherlands



MAMbo is supported by



COMUNE DI BOLOGNA



**LIST OF WORKS**

*Bas Jan Ader*

*Implosion/The artist contemplating the forces of Nature, 1967*

stampa litografata offset su carta / offset litho on paper

46 x 31,5 x 2,5 cm

Collezione Privata / Private Collection Amsterdam

*Bas Jan Ader*

*The Artist as Consumer of Extreme Comfort, 1968*

stampa ai sali d'argento / gelatin silver print

33,7 x 48,3 cm

In collaborazione con / In cooperation with the Bas Jan Ader Estate, Mary Sue Ader Andersen and Patrick Painter Editions

*Bas Jan Ader*

*Please Don't Leave Me, 1969*

stampa ai sali d'argento / gelatin silver print

28 x 35,5 cm

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

*Bas Jan Ader*

*All My clothes, 1970*

stampa ai sali d'argento / gelatin silver print

28 x 35,5 cm

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

*Bas Jan Ader*

*Fall I, Los Angeles, 1970*

pellicola 16 mm, in bianco e nero, su DVD / black and white 16 mm film on DVD

24"

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

*Bas Jan Ader*

*Fall II, Amsterdam, 1970*

pellicola 16 mm, in bianco e nero, su DVD / black and white 16 mm film on DVD

19"

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Bas Jan Ader  
*Broken fall (geometric) Westkapelle, Holland, 1971*  
pellicola 16 mm, in bianco e nero su DVD / black and white, silent, 16 mm  
film on DVD  
1'49"  
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Bas Jan Ader  
*Broken fall (organic) Amsterdamse Bos, Holland, 1971*  
film 16 mm in bianco e nero, su DVD / black and white, 16 mm film on DVD  
1'49"  
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Bas Jan Ader  
*Farewell to Faraway Friends, 1971*  
stampa a colori / C-print  
49 x 56 cm  
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Bas Jan Ader  
*I'm too sad to tell you, 1971*  
film 16 mm in bianco e nero / black and white 16 mm film  
3'34"  
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Bas Jan Ader  
*Nightfall, 1971*  
pellicola 16 mm in bianco e nero, senza sonoro su DVD / black and white  
16 mm film (silent) on DVD  
4' 16"  
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Bas Jan Ader  
*On the road to a new Neo Plasticism, Westkapelle Holland, 1971*  
4 stampe C-prints / 4 C-prints  
30 x 30 cm ognuna / 30 x 30 cm each  
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Bas Jan Ader  
*Untitled (Swedish fall)*, 1971  
2 stampe C-print / 2 C-prints  
40,6 x 40,6 cm ognuna / each  
In collaborazione con / In cooperation with the Bas Jan Ader Estate, Mary Sue Ader Andersen and Patrick Painter Editions

Bas Jan Ader  
*Untitled (The Elements)*, 1971  
stampa C-print / C-print  
28,7 x 35,5 cm  
In collaborazione con / In cooperation with the Bas Jan Ader Estate, Mary Sue Ader Andersen and Patrick Painter Editions

Bas Jan Ader  
*Untitled (Westkapelle, The Netherlands)*, 1971  
2 stampe C-print / 2 C-prints  
40,6 x 40,6 cm ognuna / each  
In collaborazione con / In cooperation with the Bas Jan Ader Estate, Mary Sue Ader Andersen and Patrick Painter Editions

Bas Jan Ader  
*The boy who fell over Niagara Falls*, 1972  
pellicola 16 mm in bianco e nero su DVD / black and white 16 mm film on DVD  
In collaborazione con / In cooperation with the Bas Jan Ader Estate, Mary Sue Ader Andersen and Patrick Painter Editions

Bas Jan Ader  
*Untitled (Tea Party)*, 1972  
6 stampe C-print / 6 C-prints  
12,5 x 20 cm ognuna / 12,5 x 20 cm each  
Creditline: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Bas Jan Ader  
*Thoughts unsaid, then forgotten*, 1973  
installazione-performance / installation-performance  
acrilico nero, treppiedi, lampada a morsetto, fiori, vaso / acrylic paint, tripod, clamp-on lamp, flowers, vase  
In collaborazione con / In cooperation with the Bas Jan Ader Estate, Mary Sue Ader Andersen and Patrick Painter Editions



Bas Jan Ader

*Piet Niet*, 1974

pittura su carta, 8 fogli / paint on paper, 8 sheets

72,2 x 55,5 cm ognuno / each

In collaborazione con / In cooperation with the Bas Jan Ader Estate, Mary Sue Ader Andersen and Patrick Painter Editions

Bas Jan Ader

*Primary time*, 1974

video a colori senza sonoro, su DVD / silent video in colour, on DVD

26'

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Bulletin 89. Bas Jan Ader *In search of the miraculous*, 1975

litografia a stampa offset su carta / Offset lithography on paper.

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Rene Daalder

*Here is Always Somewhere Else*, 2007

film documentario / documentary film

78'

Documentazione (libri e cataloghi) / Documentations (books and catalogues)

**TECHNICAL SHEET**

Title:	<i>Bas Jan Ader. Tra due mondi</i>
Curator:	Javier Hontoria
Exhibition venue:	Villa delle Rose via Saragozza 228/230 – Bologna
Exhibition dates:	January 24 – March 17, 2013
Opening hours:	Wednesday, Thursday, Friday h 2.00 p.m. – 6. p.m. Saturday and Sunday h 12 p.m. – 6 p.m. Monday and Tuesday closed
ART CITY Bologna opening hours:	24 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> January h 12 p.m. – 8 p.m. 26 <sup>th</sup> January h 12 p.m. – 12 a.m. 27 <sup>th</sup> January gennaio h 12 p.m. – 8 p.m
Admission:	full price 6 €; reduced price 4 €
Information:	ph. +39 051 6496611 – fax +39 051 6496600 info@mambo-bologna.org www.mambo-bologna.org
Catalogue:	MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna / Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen
Press:	Elisa Maria Cerra / Silvia Tonelli ph. +39 051 6496653 / 608 ufficiostampamambo@comune.bologna.it
MAMbo is supported by:	Regione Emilia-Romagna Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio in Bologna Fondazione del Monte di Bologna e Ravenna
The exhibition is part of:	ART CITY Bologna (promoted by Comune di Bologna and BolognaFiere in occasion of Arte Fiera)
The exhibition is supported by:	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Rome KLM