

Bahamut?

بَاهَامُوت

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God made the earth, but the earth had no base and so under the earth he made an angel. But the angel had no base so under the angel's feet he made a crag of ruby. But the crag had no base and so under the crag he made a bull. But the bull had no base and so under the bull he made a fish named Bahamut, and under the fish he put water, and under the water he put darkness, and beyond that men's knowledge does not reach.

(The book of imaginary beings, Jorge Luis Borges)

One of the most widespread laptop in the world exhibits frontally the picture of Eden's bitten apple; the shoes we wear carry a symbol representing the wings of a Greek goddess; *VENUS* is the name of razors used by careful girls to ensure smooth and attractive legs. In the era of *deployed technology* which runs to meet every need, the gods and ancestral beliefs barely make a living with substitute jobs: little trappings in decor of a much more solid and aware knowledge, that with all the right is playing with a history of rituals and fears.

Even if the gods abandoned Mount Olympus (as the satellite photos show), it still seems very present within man a certain "ritual" behavior : as Wittgenstein writes, man is "a ceremonial animal", ritual is necessary to him as it satisfies a desire, either anticipating or replacing symbolically its realization. And myth is to be understood not as a primitive response to nature, but as a projection of the symbolization process, as an ideal. But in the era of rising rule of technology over life, the most common practice is the ritual without myth.

Yet in the queues of lucky buyers who gather at dawn waiting for the last smartphone model, in the ceremonial masks inspired by *V for Vendetta*, in the worship of celebrities we can perhaps envision a new mythology. A ritual with myth, in fact, made of "short-living" gods, whose life cycles coincides with that the of the product. Nothing different from other tactics of power, the heroic myth on which the Fascist dialectic leverages to generate consensus. The ephemeral myth as a marketing tool, effective because building on unconscious archetypes as well as on the never filled necessity to find a sense in ourselves and in what is around us. And if the old myths were a dialogue with nature, the contemporary ones concerns a dialogue between man and the mass consumption society, and the ritual is a reconciliation with the social model commanding to buy, consume, destroy, buy again.

Bahamut? is our question to the artists about how they relate to this dichotomous myth: the contemporary approach or the discover of an ancient knowledge to communicate with the Earth? The very nature of Bahamut embodies this survey. In Arabic cosmology Bahamut is the latest organic basis in the world, located at the bottom of the cognizable. It is an incessant quest for depth, a backdrop upon which the universe scaffolds that turns out to be rocketed unreachable. And at the same time the ancestral fish entirely adapted itself to its new vocation: if searched on Google, Bahamut takes the form of a dragon, as iconized in video games (first of all *Final Fantasy*), made of pixels, polygons or at most embodied in action figures.

Our task for the artists in this exhibition is to tell their own balance between the fish and the dragon.

