
CROSSING

The verb “to cross” does not only mean passing through a place or exploring it far and wide. Instead, it implies the presence of obstacles blocking the road that must be overcome. In its second rearrangement, this room aims to suggest the presence of horizontal crossings, all united by the underlying idea of borders.

The first border is suggested by Antonio Rovaldi with *End. Words from the Margins. New York City*, in which he documents his journey walking across the waterfront areas of New York’s five boroughs, where they meet the sea. These are places where nature reclaims its territory, where the city’s iconic character gives way to unprecedented landscapes, elegiac and rich in human solitude and rarefaction. Areas where a reinterpretation of human existence is possible thanks to their specific location: the city margins. Other kinds of borders, man-established yet inhuman, were encountered by Filippo Berta during his crossing of Europe, America, and Asia. *One by One* combines an infinity-shaped sculpture with the direct involvement of the people divided by barbed wire as they count its spikes to reflect on the concept of time, imponderable and tied to pain and conflicts.

From geographical to political, this theme continues to be intertwined with a reflection on time and, therefore, on history. It is then taken up by Torenbosch, who focuses on the European Union. The monochrome blue, inducing an attitude of doubt, is actually the background of the flag chosen by Arsène Heitz and Paul Lévy for the Council of Europe in 1955 and adopted thirty years later by the European Economic Union at the opening of its Parliament. The stars’ absence questions the relationships between Countries, which are becoming increasingly complex, and, ten years after the artwork’s realization, remain of tragic topicality.

Another border closes the circle, switching from defining places of life – the land and the sea – to delineating a more undetermined yet universal matter: the boundary between life and death. Several rats are portrayed in the act of eating a dolphin. Animals from opposite worlds tell how it is always possible to pass from one condition to another and how a creature can feed other lives in a perennial cycle of rebirth through death.

Filippo Berta (Treviglio, 1977)
One by One, 2019/2021
One by One - No End, 2019/2021

In the contemporary international scene, more than seventy border walls divide countries, communities, and ethnicities creating geographical, physical, and cognitive divisions and ultimately leading to the determination of social relationships between human beings. The project *One by One* returns those borders through artistic action.

Between 2019 and 2020, Filippo Berta crossed Europe to reach America and Asia, recording video footage and generating participative actions in residents of border areas, asking them to count out loud, in their native language, the spikes of the barbed wire placed on top of the walls. In a sort of ritual action, Berta uses a utopian count, endlessly repeating and dilating through space and time, through past and future, to denounce the impossibility of seeing an end to this.

As highlighted in the photo series, *One by One* starts from the concrete action of touching the spikes of those border walls that manifest themselves with a monumental and intimidatory arrogance. However, its aim is to entice people to reflect on the infinite forms of invisible barriers ingrained in us, feeding the underlying tensions of collectivity.

A sculpture of concertina wire, the barbed wire the artist has encountered as a recurring red thread on every border he reached, formalizes into the infinite symbol and becomes the narrative voice of frontiers, turning into its dramatic shared emblem.

Antonio Rovaldi (Parma, 1975)
End. Words from the Margins, New York City, 2019 (from the series)
(with Tommaso Zerbinì), *Five Walks. NYC*, 2016/2020

Antonio Rovaldi describes the most iconic metropolis of the world, New York, from an unprecedented point of view: its outskirts. The artist has walked along the city’s five boroughs – Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, The Bronx, Staten Island – to explore their edges and their waterfronts, addressing different themes: the vegetation of the city’s margins compared to the urban expansion, the urban waste shown in a new contextualization, the relationship between photography and literary production and, furthermore, photography as a construction of a visual novel composed around the city.

End. Words from the Margins, New York City is a tribute to the act of seeing and enables the possibility to describe the city and its development through physically traversing its spaces. At its center is the idea that a conscious rebirth of society can generate more marginal areas, tracing a border that is not only geographical but political and anthropological as well.

Five Walks. NYC (2017–2020) is a sound installation split into five chapters – one for each borough of New York – that originates from the collaboration between the artist and the sound designer Tommaso Zerbinì. Field recordings, interwoven with a voice that acts as the artist’s alter ego, provide the sound and the image of an elastic geography, between silences and metropolitan noises, creating a rhythm that references the very idea of walking.

Remco Torenbosch (Assen, 1982), *European conceptualization in analytical philosophy on history and present*, 2011-2012

In 1950 the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman presented a plan for cooperation among European states. Seven years later, the first six countries signed the Treaty of Rome, creating the European Economic Community (EEC), the forerunner of what we now call the European Union. Picking up the color of the European flag chosen for the Council of Europe by Arsène Heitz and Paul Lévy in 1955, Torenbosch’s monochrome blue is deprived of the stars representing the Nations. The stars’ absence questions the contemporary relationships between Countries as they become increasingly complex. Consequently, *European conceptualization in analytical philosophy on history and present* is an artwork that, ten years after its realization, offers a reflection of tragic relevance on the political and socio-economic changes to which Europe has been subjected in the last years. Torenbosch investigates the language and manifestations through which a community and continent declares, represents and questions itself through the consciousness of contemporary and historical references. Within this research, Torenbosch tries to distill the situation as a return to a more human scale and perspective by underlining the importance of care and action.

Federico Tosi (Milano, 1988), *Untitled (topi e delfino)*, 2022

The sculpture is the fifth of an ongoing series *Rotten Bullshit* that started in 2015, in which Federico Tosi explores – and idealizes – “the highest moment of decomposition”. The artist has always been interested in the cyclicity of decomposition, that is, the fine line between life and death. A lifeless body becomes nourishment for other living beings, energetic and swarming matter that keeps on living and regenerating through a transformation that implies englobing another life, a reincarnation in practicality.

In *Untitled (topi e delfino)*, the artist recounts the concept of crossing by reflecting on different aspects of the very idea of boundary. On the one hand, the border is seen as *limes* between two kingdoms, dividing the living from the dead. On the other, it represents an encounter between two opposing worlds, cetaceans and rodents, hardly caught communicating with one another. This outlines a paradoxical universe, somehow made symbolic by a brush between two species of contrasting nature. In the artist’s words: “In one I see a world inhabited by creatures floating in an infinite and ethereal substance, in the other, in contrast, a swarming cluster living in the substrate of metropolises”.