

Press release

TESSA M. DEN UYL

Opening Thursday February 23 2006, 6.00 p.m.
Galleria Lia Rumma, Milano

The Lia Rumma Gallery in Milan is delighted to present part of the *URV – ARÂ* project by Tessa M. den Uyl. The expression, which is also used in the titles of the two videos on view in the exhibition, refers to a Sanskrit expression which refers to the "fertility of the earth". The underlying concept adopted by the artist is that of *Homo deus natura* (man as lord of nature) which, apart from the close ties to nature, is related to the ancient origins of the geographical landscape and, in a broader sense, the "fertility of ideas". The three videos on display - *URV ARÂ RUMBOWLING I*, *URV ARÂ RUMBOWLING II* and *THE LAND OF MOURN* – form part of a project made up of separate segments designed to constitute a single film (though only ideally) and intended to be a sort of work in progress. Each video consists of a sequence of independent scene in which a part of the story is constructed through the ideal notes of the artist.

The protagonists of the films are two female characters who eventually meet up in the final work - the Widow of the sailor (*Widow of Mourn*), who incarnates the essence of the victim, and Nehellenia, a character whose origins can be traced back to a traditional Dutch deity, the protectress of sailors. The two figures are played by the artist herself and their identity is emphasised by their costumes which play an take on clearly defined symbolic meanings. At the end of *URV ARÂ RUMBOWLING I*, for example, the widow wears a costume which bears a resemblance to a sort of boat; this metaphor of an internal metamorphosis had already begun during the story and culminates in a journey which is more spiritual in nature than physical. In *URV ARÂ RUMBOWLING II* in which the boat reappears, Nehellenia wears a white dress which dominates the final image of the video, linked to the enactment of her extreme final gesture.

The three works also contain a series of cross-references. In the last video *THE LAND OF MOURN*, the arrow which was shot in the first video reappears. This sequence also sees the return of the boat which transports Nehellenia into a landscape dominated almost exclusively by water. The scenario alludes to a primordial space and highlights the geological and historical changes which the Earth has undergone, as a living organism, during its evolution. The colours used in the video sequences are also frequently inter-connected, as in the case of the red ochre used by the Widow to cover the face of Nehellenia in *THE LAND OF MOURN* and used in the set as a backdrop to *RUMBOWLING II*.

The characters invented by Tessa M. den Uyl are described using a series of symbolic and archetypal references and often have their origin in Northern European imagery. In this case, as in her previous works, the protagonists of the videos do not have just one single identity but appear as both individuals and multiple personalities, incarnating the plurality that has always characterised the identity of mankind.

TESSA M. DEN UYL, born in 1973 in Utrecht (Holland), has confirmed her reputation as one of the most interesting young contemporary video artists. In 2005 her work was shown at Patrizia Pepe in Prato; she took part in the "Jianghu 3 video exhibition" held at the Lijiang Studio in Kunming, China and in the "*Napoli presente*" exhibition held at the PAN contemporary art gallery in Naples. She also took part in the Turin Film Festival in 2003 and, in the same year, put on two shows at the Lia Rumma Gallery in Naples and Milan.

She currently lives and works in Florence.