

Victor Burgin

Dear Urania

Galleria Lia Rumma NAPLES

Opening: Sunday October 16th 2016, 11 am

Gallery hours: Tuesday - Saturday 11 am - 1.30 pm / 2.30 - 7 pm

Galleria Lia Rumma is pleased to announce *Dear Urania*, a solo exhibition by Victor Burgin, which will open on Sunday October 16th, 2016 in the neapolitan gallery space.

Artist and academic, author of fundamental essays on photography and art theory, Burgin is an undisputed master of conceptual art.

In the seventies, his work investigated the relationship between image and text (Galleria Lia Rumma, Naples, 1972) and from there he went on to examine the complex area between still and moving images.

His work explores the nature of the image, but also picks out the dominant aspects of its representation. His most recent projects are made using software for creating virtual games, a medium that allows him to take the image to a state in which it is essentially virtual.

As he has often pointed out, his exhibitions are a response to the places and cities to which he is invited and to the inspiration and mental associations that come from them.

For *Dear Urania* in particular, the inspiration comes from a short pamphlet called *Report on the First Voyage to the Moon Made by a Woman in the Year of Our Lord 2057*, written in 1857 by the mathematician and astronomer Ernesto Capocci di Belmonte (1798-1864), director of the newly built Capodimonte Astronomical Observatory in 1833. He was removed from his post in 1850 for having taken part in the 1848 liberal revolution against Bourbon rule. Capocci was restored to office in 1860, when Garibaldi arrived in Naples, and remained director of the observatory until his death in 1864. In the pamphlet – which, it is worth pointing out, predates the highly imaginative and far more famous pages by Jules Verne – the protagonist, Urania, writes a long letter from the Moon to her friend Ernestina on Earth, with “the most bizarre details of this wonderful voyage”.

Dear Urania is a “reaction” to this letter.

In an intricately allusive multiplication of space-time, gliding between the past and near future, between Naples and America, and from the Moon to the Earth and back, Burgin does not simply transcribe the content of Ernestina’s letter, but rather imagines the circumstances in which it was written. There are two videos, one showing the various phases of the Moon, and the other Ernestina’s words. These appear in the form of intertitles, alternating with the movement of the camera in an almost empty loft. The videos are accompanied by *Pagine dallo Sketchbook di Ernestina Capocci* and two series of photographs, (*Basilica I* and *Basilica II*), which suggest an analogy between the lunar landscape and that of Pompeii.

Victor Burgin (Sheffield, England, 1941) is one of the most eminent academic artists of our time.

He studied painting at the Royal College of Art in London (1962-65) and Philosophy at Yale (MFA, 1967). He is currently Emeritus Professor of History of Consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and Emeritus Millard Chair of Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, University of London. His works are in the collections of leading institutions such as The Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Corcoran Gallery, Washington DC; Museum of Contemporary Art and LA County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Tate Gallery, Tate Modern, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. He is the author of several books that have left their mark on critical debate, and not only in America. These include: *Thinking Photography* (1982), *Between* (1986), *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity* (1986), *In/Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture*, Shadowed (1996); *The Remembered Film* (Reaktion, 2004); *Situational Aesthetics* (Leuven University Press, 2009); *Parallel Texts: interviews and interventions about art* (Reaktion, 2011).

