

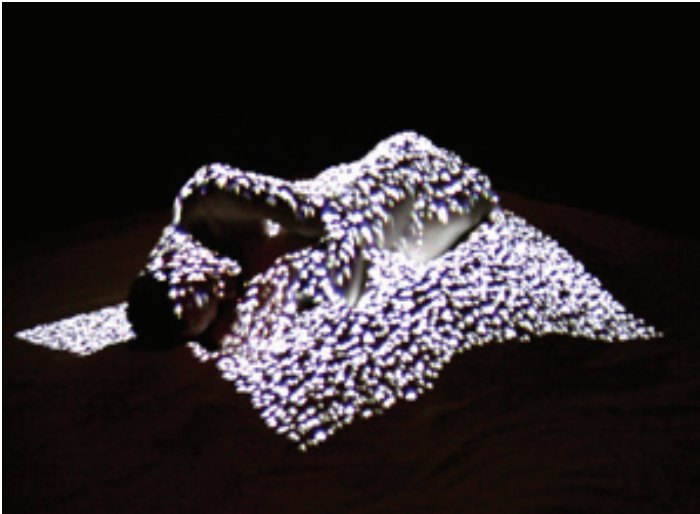
Genius Loci XII Biennale di Scultura, 2008 Carrara (IT)

performance, projection, installations



Carrara is well-known for its white marble and the famous sculptors, such as Michelangelo, who came here to select marble for their works. Labor in the marble caves, owned by a few aristocratic families, was hard and dangerous. Around 70 BC the Romans brought slaves to the region who developed the ancient manual techniques of marble extraction, called *lizzatura*, using sleds and ropes to transport the blocks of marble. Protesting against the bad labour conditions, cave workers revolted and formed an anarchist movement (in 1883), which is active to this day. *Umanità Nova*, the weekly of the Federazione Anarchica Italiana, is printed here, for example. The first Biennale di Scultura was held in Carrara in 1957. The Art Academy of Fine Arts of Carrara is most famous for its sculpture department. In recent years however the academy started to invest more in new art forms. There is now a department for New Media, featuring courses on digital video, sound design, multimedia, digital culture, computer art, net art, hacker art, aesthetics of the interface, software art, interaction design, fundamentals of information science, et cetera. In 2006 at the twelfth edition of the Biennale di Carrara, Michela Pelusio and Vignir Karlsson (at the time students of the ArtScience master program) were invited to exhibit their light- and sound-

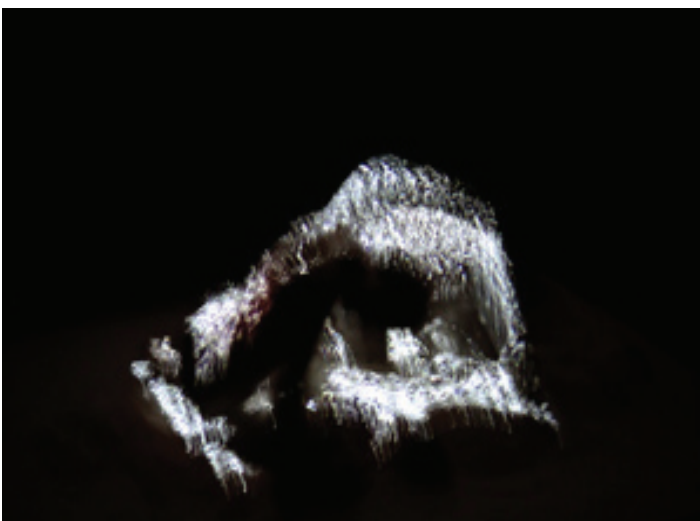
sculptures. LightSpeaker and Metalight formed an exception at the Biennale di Carrara, for their synesthetic approach. The current edition of the Biennale di Carrara is curated by Francesco Poli, and entitled *Nothing but sculpture*. The choice of the title underlines the specific character of this event, and it reasserts the tight link between the town and the production of sculptures. The exhibition focuses on the most significant and innovative aspects of sculpture, giving rise to an in-depth reflection and to a more precise vision of the present situation in this creative sector, by comparing young emerging artists with artists of great renown. The Biennale di Carrara is divided into several sections: Homages, The Topicality of Marble, New Statues, Sculpture as a Living Body, In Town, The Marble Workshops and Sculpting Time. An overview of all the sections can be found in the catalogue, *Nothing but Sculpture* (Sylvana Editoriale). The section Sculpting Time, in the main academy building, focuses on the introduction of the time dimension in sculpture. Sculpting Time is curated by prof. Alessandro Romanini, and the director of the academy, Marco Baudinelli, and hosts young artists from different European art academies. This section hosts some of the pieces created during the ArtScience research group Genius Loci which investigated the spirit of the place in the mountains of Carrara, during a two week stay in April 2008. The pieces were inspired by the anarchic movement of Carrara, the natural and artificial sounds of the caves, and the industrial and unsustainable exploitation of the marble mountains. A number of pieces were selected for the exhibition: Thijs Elich and Violet Jongejans' performance *Marmo* was presented for the opening ceremony of the Bienale di Carrara. Their petrified white bodies were hidden in a pile of five hundred kilo marble powder which slowly started to move, breathe, and come alive.



1 Marmo - Performance



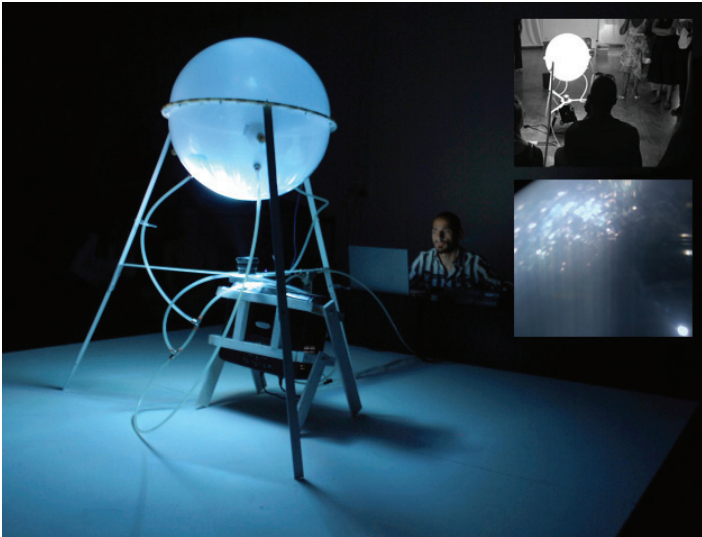
2 Marmo



3 Marmo

In the exhibition Alfredo Cianeameo presents *Cavascopio*, an audio-visual installation and performance in which video and sound are projected in a glass ball filled with moving marble powder. Nicky Assmann and Eric Parren show *Transizione*, a split-screen video documentary on the interior of the marble caves, and the industrial activities. The sounds of the video are a composition of sounds in the cave, an overtone singing performance, and a remix of anarchist songs, reminding of the cantilena which made marble move by the rhythmic use of voices. Renée Hulshoff and Lars Kynde present *Cutting marble*, cutting sound, an installation consisting of a bookcase taken from the anarchist library and a poetic video-book of the Italian anarchist and poet Riccardo Villari reciting his text on the destruction of the mountains. The exhibited pieces were fruits of the *Genius Loci* research group, earlier this year in Carrara. While the pieces had already premiered right after the end of the research group at the NIKI, the Dutch University Institute for Art History in Florence, the Biennale di Carrara offered a great opportunity for the students to present their work in an international exhibition for a period of two months. It is remarkable that, next to the interest shown into the works of the ArtScience students the interest in our way to innovate the art curriculum has been covered in two independent art publications. The first one, about art and technology, was published by Alessandro Romanini in the form of an interview with Frans Evers, at the time head of Interfaculty ArtScience, was published in the first issue of the semestral magazine *HiArt* (Romanini, 2008). And, subsequently to this year's Biennale, the organizers of the environmental and itinerary art exhibition *Genius Loci*, held in August on the Italian island of Palmaria, invited Michela Pelusio to write about her experiences as a guest teacher of the Interfaculty ArtScience and the project in Carrara. The article *Genius Loci / Genius Itineris* was published last July in the publication *Genius Loci* (Athena Edizioni, 2008).

Michela Pelusio & Frans Evers



4 CavaScopio - Installation



5 Cutting marble, cutting sound - Installation



6 Transizione - video