

# Rosa Barba + David Maljkovic

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it grinds them down, as  
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rough edges of things  
were eroded." —D. M.

For several months over the past year, Rosa Barba and David Maljkovic, who were based in Stockholm and Zagreb, respectively, sent each other an array of texts and images. The ad hoc archive ended up composing a fictional narrative that eventually became the film installation *Handed Over*, exhibited last winter at the Project Art Centre in Dublin. Combining a 16 mm film projection with a parasitical architectural structure that invaded the gallery, *Handed Over* arcs back to the tradition of the Surrealist exquisite corpse, while also imagining a new form of storytelling and collaborative scriptwriting.

The piece is the latest of a number of projects the two have worked on together since meeting at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in 2003. Born in Italy in 1972 and now based in Berlin, Barba makes films whose plots are temporally vague, suspended somewhere between an archaic past and a blurred future. They evoke dystopian atmospheres in which buildings verge on disappearing and the skies are charged with a sense of impending catastrophe. Barba's narratives combine a documentary approach with a sci-fi core, resulting in what the artist likes to call "a confrontation with another reality, a form of revelation."

Barba's fascination with science fiction is one of many points of intersection with Maljkovic's practice: both artists, in fact, share a view of the future as a mirror for our past, and both use architecture as a metaphor for human desires. Through sculptural installations, collages, and videos, Maljkovic, a Croatian, questions his country's troubled history, extrapolating its monuments from the local context, so that they seem to belong to strange and unknown civilizations. There is something hypnotic about Maljkovic's videos; they often combine historical facts with visionary, almost hallucinatory, fictions. As the artist explains, the future represents a space of potential optimism: "It makes facts softer; it grinds them down, as if the sharpness and the rough edges of things were eroded."

And something similar happens in the collaborations between Barba and Maljkovic: the edges and borders of their individual practices get blurred, resulting in a third space in which images, voices, and places take on a ghostly presence, and viewers find themselves enveloped, becoming involuntary actors within a new and expanded form of architectural cinema.

—Cecilia Alemani

Rosa Barba, Berlin, September 2008. Photo: self-portrait.  
David Maljkovic, Zagreb, September 2008. Photo: Hrvoje Franjic.





