

Heidi Valda

Insania

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*'What actually happens when a glitch occurs is unknown,
I stare at the glitch as a void of knowledge; a strange dimension
where the laws of technology are suddenly very different
from what I expected and know.'*
Glitch Studies Manifesto, Rosa Menkman, 2010

Insania invites us to travel through this strange dimension. A wandering technological device, impossible to put into words. As soon as you try, it has already been transformed. It revels in its chaos, a chaos that can only be understood through an embodied experience.

It is a dimly lit space where bodies are resting and bodies are travelling through. Twenty interconnected devices are joined to twenty spherical speakers. They communicate through light interference; they are intertwined by cables. Always attentive to human presence, technological bodies react in a perceptible yet unpredictable manner. They manifest themselves in sound – or rather, in noise.

Shining in the gloom, their organic forms conceal the entrails of circuits hand-assembled by the artist herself, Heidi Valda, thereby opening up a space for material speculation: circuits as language, cables as narrative structure, movement as plot.

They appear as strange beings suspended in the air. Their formal similarity disguises the way in which they were constructed. They do not come from any industrial factory, but were rather handcrafted through a material transition that goes from the ethereally digital to the opaquely solid, passing through various chemical states of fluidity. A monstrous interface that melts, pierces, sands, drills and assembles until reaching its final form.

This artisanal technology, the core of Valda's practice, turns the technical gesture into a philosophical question. Soldering a circuit, unmoulding or drilling a surface is similarly a form of thinking: through touch, error and improvisation. It is a way of bringing material meaning to the world. Although all the devices were built from the same blueprint, they contain within them the margin of error that allows for difference. The slightest variation in a drop of tin alters the emitted sound. Each misalignment is a glitch: an unpredictable alteration that opens up the possibility of a new state.

The uncontrollable noise they emit feeds back into the light that generates them, and this creates a theatrical machine inhabited by agents, or 'automatons', as the artist herself calls them.

First order, the space where fully analogue sound confronts the digitally generated image.

Second order, the human body in motion, its irruption altering and recombining the analogue-digital communication of the environment.

Third order, the symbolic, the automaton of feedback and rupture: the experience of *insania*, which becomes a system that generates fourth-order effects. In other words, a new state of consciousness.

So where does this new state of consciousness lead us?
To madness.



The artist offers an expanded conception of *insania*: a creative force, a crack in consciousness that destabilises the framework of normality. In her vision, the glitch does not represent a failure, but a generative power, a threshold towards what is beyond control and obviousness escapes. It is indeed a rupture, but it opens the door to a new space that is executed in real time in the exhibition gallery.

Valda draws her inspiration in this project from Ingrid Guardiola's thesis that today's world operates as an interface: a network of languages and technological supports that have standardised the ways in which we construct meaning. According to this perspective, *Insania* is conceived as an act of symbolic resistance, an interruption to the normative flow that imposes what is understandable, what is desirable, what is real.

The artist also adopts the idea that, as with the origin of noise, a rupture in harmony is not merely chaos: it is the beginning of other music. And in the glitch, she finds a poetic figure, an aesthetic of revelation. In line with the questions posed by Huxley in *The Doors of Perception*, madness would then be that altered state in which consciousness ceases to be filtered by what is socially acceptable, accessing a deeper, more ambiguous, more expansive dimension.

With this proposal, Valda points out that those who experienced states of *insania* in many ancient cultures were not rejected, but listened to. They were seers, prophets, sages. A connection with the immaterial, with what dwells on the margins of ordinary consciousness, was recognised in them.

Insania becomes a rite of passage: an experience that leads the audience to symbolically travel through from sanity to madness. From the expected to the uncertain. From clarity to excess. The installation shows not only a broken system, but also causes it to explode from within, involving the viewer's body as a transforming automaton.

Mónica Rikić

La Capella's curatorial team