

2019

Snapshots of the absurd

BECKETT & BECKETT

Tommaso Le Pera

**SEVENTY PHOTOS
OF HAPPY DAYS
BY SAMUEL BECKETT**

Dublin Wools

**AN INSTALLATION
BY RAFFAELE CURI**

RHINOCEROS™

Established in Roma by Alda Fendi

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*In the tremulous malice of haggard
souls, from Ionesco to Beckett, the
Absurd visions of another visionary
action. Being Beckett and transferring
into iconic happy days the deafening
felucca hats of metaphysical teachings
transferred by the word, which renders
imperfect the tonality imposed by
drifting mysteries. Connected by an &.
Astonished sophisms!
Nordic masks!
And Dublin sweaters to defend culture.*

Alda Fendi

*Beautiful as Beckett.
With his snow-white hair.
A magnificent face marked by time,
tempered by that sense opposite
to acquiescence that gives us the
horrendous miasma of life softened
by an eternal ironic nonsense.
Absurd as incomprehension.
Flexible as a child.
White as the Dublin sweaters.*

I will sate myself on radishes.

*Run from fear
Fun from rear
Oh dear, what will the Theatre
of the Absurd people say?*

Raffaele Curi



Beckett & Beckett is the second instalment of *Istantanee dell'assurdo*, a survey in images, sounds and words. Devoted to the theatrical genius of Samuel Beckett, it continues the thread begun by Eugène Ionesco – the protagonist of *Ionesco, il Rinoceronte e Roma*, an action that took place in April and May 2019 at the rhinoceros art gallery, the building designed by Jean Nouvel for Alda Fendi.

After having taken on board the ancient and the contemporary, here is an Experiment that is at once exploration and reflection on the gaze of Samuel Beckett, an immersion in the absurd and the surreal as a point of view on the world.

Beckett & Beckett comprises two confluences: an exhibition entitled Tommaso Le Pera. Settanta foto di *Giorni felici di Samuel Beckett* [*Tommaso Le Pera. Seventy Photos of Happy Days by Samuel Beckett*] and *Lane da Dublino* [*Dublin Wools*], an installation by Raffaele Curi.

Tommaso Le Pera. Settanta foto di Giorni felici di Samuel Beckett charts the journey of the "photographer of Italian theatre" through the masterpiece of the Irish writer, published and staged for the first time in 1961 and produced many times since.

Parading before our eyes are the most interesting and fascinating stagings in Italy and abroad: from Antonio Calenda to Robert Wilson, and from Mario Missiroli to Anna Marchesini and Claudio Jankowski. And also: Giampiero Solari, Riccardo Caporossi, Andrea Renzi, Giancarlo Cauteruccio, Marco Isidori.

Seventy photos and ten stagings of *Happy Days*, later translated by Beckett himself as *Oh les beaux jours*.



Encompassing silhouettes of Beckett and white "Dublin" sweaters, Raffaele Curi's installation *Lane da Dublino* is a provocation and a tribute to the Irish literary genius.

White wool yarn acts as a *trait d'union* and creates a visible, subterranean path between the parts of this action and all the exhibition spaces of the rhinoceros gallery.

Also acting as a *trait d'union* between Ireland and Italy is *The Taking of Christ*, the "rediscovered Caravaggio" of the National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin. Commissioned in Rome by Cardinal Ciriaco Mattei, nothing more was known about this work until it was identified in 1990 as a painting belonging to the Jesuits in Dublin, previously attributed to Gherardo delle Notti.

On loan to the National Gallery of Ireland, an important document for this new attribution was found in the library of the Antici Mattei family in Recanati.

There are innumerable symbols in Caravaggio's painting. Is the lamp holder Diogenes in search of truth? Likewise, there are innumerable symbols on the Irish sweaters of the Aran Islands, which fishermen's wives knitted with waxed wool and with popular crests associated with different families, to help identify anyone lost at sea.

Look for, search, identity. The core of this installation, *Lane da Dublino*, is in fact the search.



Samuel Beckett, an author crucial for understanding contemporaneity. Born in a land rich in culture and poetry, Ireland, he was also a writer of international appeal. A brilliant writer, he worked in both English and French. At the same time, paradoxically, he was the sublime artist of incommunicability.

Famous for plays like *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame* and *Krapp's Last Tape*, his works marked a decisive turning point in contemporary theatre. A novelist but above all a playwright, Nobel prize-winner for literature in 1969, a friend of James Joyce, a Dante scholar but also an excellent cricket player, so much so that he is said to be the only Nobel to have also been included in the prestigious *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack*.

Happy Days are the ones remembered by the protagonist Winnie while talking to her husband Willie. Happy are the days spent, happy is the present that goes by on stage in front of our eyes, while she is semi-buried in the ground from which only her upper torso and then only her head appears, in a stubborn and continual struggle to face days that are always the same, always empty, immobile, in an almost absolute monologue.



Winnie is the symbol of an exhausted humanity, who nonetheless is stubbornly determined to resist, to fill the silence. The optimism of the will apparent from her words creates through contrast a sense of drama and desolation that accentuates the threat of nothingness that invades her, of the nothingness that she herself is.

Film / Not Film

A film essay by Ross Lipman on Samuel Beckett's *Film*, with Buster Keaton.

Courtesy of Reading Bloom / Milestone Film

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Raffaele Curi's installation Rhinoceros apud Saepa (selected by the ADI for the prestigious Compasso d'Oro award) was originally at the Arch of Janus - from the Latin *ianus*, 'passage' - lit, like the quadrifrons arch itself, by the Oscar winning cinematographer Vittorio Storaro and by lighting designer Francesca Storaro.

The installation has now moved from the Arch of Janus to inside the rhinoceros gallery, changing from the red that distinguished the action on Ionesco to the white devoted to Beckett.
Screening: *Happy Days* by Samuel Beckett, Eutheca.

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