

Spam (Article for the magazine Effetto Arte)

There are days when the "young" artist checks his email inbox to clear it of the 8,723 messages from self-styled gallerists, promoters, organisers, excipients and flavour enhancers.

Deep ecology begins here too.

For every person who proposes an interesting initiative to promote our work, there are 8,722 proposing unpronounceable vulgarities at hyperbolic prices.

It is in this context that the "young" artist must turn into a latter-day gold prospector, sieving and throwing back into the muddy swamp of the art far west the unspeakable offers, and slipping into his pocket the flakes and nuggets that will make his fortune.

Patiently our hero must leave his beloved easel and let himself be flooded by this dense river of bombastic promotional information, also known as spam.

The practice of spam consists in sending unwanted messages through any communication system. The term originates from a comic sketch in Monty Python's Flying Circus, set in a café where every dish proposed by the waitress contained an unspecified ingredient called Spam, corresponding to a brand of tinned meat produced by the American Hormel Foods Corp.

The tin of Spam is therefore the Campbell's soup of this beginning of the century.

Would it not be better to escape this martyrdom by destroying at a single stroke all unwanted emails and those from unknown senders?

Absolutely NOT.

The artist, as such, must force himself into curiosity, must dig deeper, must get his hands dirty, must carry out the alchemical process that turns shit into gold — Manzoni dixit.

Over the years, in the junk mail I have found the best collaborators, the best work opportunities and the most uninhibited girlfriends.

So the sieving must go on, starting with the elimination of the mails whose subject line carries explicit sexual proposals — these come from harlot senders — and those enthusiastically informing us that YOU HAVE WON! a competition we had never entered.

Last of all remain the mails that might contain something interesting.

Our prospector must open them and, reading them askance in the shortest possible time, assess their reliability and decide whether to reply or to bin them.

Last days to join ... BINNED, artists do not like working in a hurry.

Exceptional exhibiting opportunity at... BINNED, too showy.

Have you ever thought of exhibiting at the Louvre for only ... BINNED, good night.

Dear "young" artist, we have viewed your work and would like to include you in this initiative curated by the famous critic ... in the famous city of ... during the famous festival of ... I

REPLY.

A few minutes go by and our hero receives a telephone call from a self-styled Promoter Doctor who, extolling the artistic work she has examined together with the famous critic (in the previous two minutes, we imagine), urges him not to delay, because there are only a few places left.

From the telephone one gathers only that the Promoter Doctor is Milanese, has a fine pater, is offering the chance of a lifetime, and is heavily made up and perfumed.

If only for the perfume, the "young" one agrees to receive an email, which arrives three seconds later with all the relevant information.

Dear Young Artist,

further to our telephone conversation, I hereby send you the proposal to exhibit your works in the city of ... during the event curated by the famous critic ... The services we shall provide you are as follows:

- 1) General organisation and secretariat;
- 2) Presentation by the famous art critic;
- 3) Attendance at the opening of well-known intellectuals and art critics;
- 4) Presence, during the Event, of figures from the world of culture and television;
- 5) Installation and dismantling;
- 6) Security guarding;
- 7) Insurance of the Works on site;
- 8) Drafting of the critical text by the famous Art Critic, to be included in the exhibition catalogue;
- 9) Fine printing of the Festival catalogue;
- 10) Graphic design and printing of invitations and posters;
- 11) Promotion of the events on the web;
- 12) Design and printing of the roll-up;
- 13) Application for various patronages;
- 14) Graphic design and printing of your biography and of the colophon, to be displayed during the exhibition on forex panels;
- 15) Distribution of the promotional material;
- 16) Press office;
- 17) Coordination of contacts with the Authorities (Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, Region, Province and Municipality);
- 18) Organisation of the cocktail for the opening evening;
- 19) Invitations to collectors and sector experts;
- 20) Professional cameraman to film the vernissage;
- 21) Organisation of a press conference attended by newspapers, radio and television;
- 22) Advertising space for the event in specialised magazines;

- 23) Professional photographer for the opening evening and delivery of a CD with the photos;
- 24) Production and editing of a video of the opening;
- 25) Gala dinner after the opening of the Exhibition;
- 26) Hotel room for the night of the opening.

For this package of services an expenses reimbursement of € 28,000.00 + VAT is required, plus one of your works of our choosing from among those exhibited at the Festival.

Certain that you will appreciate this interesting opportunity, and awaiting a kind reply, I send my cordial regards.

Promoter Doctor

Our artist immediately realises that, being "young", he does not possess even the smallest part of the sum requested by way of "expenses reimbursement"; and, wondering about the very meaning of the term, he also realises that he is wasting time analysing a useless email when he could more profitably devote himself to sending his own 20,000 emails to tell everyone that his new painting is nearly ready.

Thus is completed the natural cycle that generates that constant production of junk information which, slowly rotting down, generates the humus on which Art sprouts and grows, inexorable.

Luca Motolese · Torino 2017

motolese.com — Original text in Italian