

## Art Review:

Carlo Gabriele  
Tribbioli

Carlo Gabriele Tribbioli: *Reperti per il Prossimo Milione di Anni*  
Federica Schiavo Gallery, Rome  
27 September – 2 November

**The passing of time**, the superfluity of a moment and the traces left by each generation's comparatively meagre actions are factors difficult to ignore in Rome, a city whose historical layers are wholly visible and there to be pored over by successive generations of tourists. However, deep and sustained reflections on temporality – or, effectively, mortality – are arguably as rare here as anywhere. For this reason, Carlo Gabriele Tribbioli's first solo show is remarkable in its depth of research and the artist's commitment to understanding what is a harrowing reality: the passing of time, it reminds us, is inextricable from the passing of one's own possibility of being.

Until recently virtually unknown as an artist, Tribbioli made his archival work *Reperti per il Prossimo Milione di Anni (Archaeological Finds for the Next Million Years)* between 2007 and 2009, starting by collecting objects while walking around Lake Averno, north of Naples. This lake, as Virgil's *Aeneid* confirms, was once the worship site of the divinatory cult of the Sibyls, who considered it the entrance to the underworld. The objects that Tribbioli collected and rigorously documented include the empty shells of used fireworks, a broken bracelet, a key, two hairclips and scores of other essentially useless records of past activity. Not content with such an impersonal

method of entering into the lake's mythos, Tribbioli then engaged in a two-day performance in which he consumed only milk, honey water and red wine, before laying wrapped in a burial cloth for 24 hours, leaving – inevitably – bodily emissions upon the material. The liquids consumed were those used in Orphic magical rites (ie, spiritual practices of the Ancient Greek world), leaving a kind of corporeal Turin shroud.

This mix of personal and collective mythology culminated with the production of *Il Grande Corpo Solido (The Great Large Body)*, 2007–10), a large block of resin embedded with some of the objects collected by the artist, then covered in lead and cloth and jettisoned from a dinghy as documented in *Reperti per il Prossimo Milione di Anni (Video)* (2007/2009/2012), recorded on an eerily silent lake, as if Tribbioli were offloading evidence of a heinous crime. Here, this video, together with a table installation featuring documentation of the project and various resin-block dry runs for *Il Grande Corpo Solido*, and three documentary photos from 2012, give finality to what is effectively an enquiry into our collective and individual origins and destination.

Objects that touch upon past lives, but that ultimately only serve to deepen the mystery as to who our forebears are, have been collected and left for an imagined future archaeologist to find. In this act there is a sense of duplicity. The aforesaid future archaeologist is helpfully presented with a resin capsule replete with the belongings of numerous earlier beings; yet its coming into existence is entirely contrived by the artist, however ultimately chancy Tribbioli's method of collection may have been. If there is a sense of gaming here, there is also the inference that 'play' is the most serious type of endeavour a person can engage in; and that Tribbioli, specifically, is engaging in artistic play as a means of self-discovery.

MIKE WATSON



**Carlo Gabriele Tribbioli**  
**Reperti per il Prossimo**  
**Milione di Anni (Archive)**  
(detail), 2007/2009/2012, mixed  
media, 320 x 200 x 112 cm. Photo:  
Federico Tribbioli, Courtesy  
Federica Schiavo Gallery, Rome