Priest Area

futures in Middle East, a project closed in 2003 because it was considered too cynical. I believe that during the years immediately following September 11th, terrorism was managed as it was an emergency from both the media and political points of view and it was eventually taken as a death pool. Now I would say that it is no doubt administered and the game goes wrong only in case of attacks such as in Dortmund.

With 'Ever dream this man?' you provided a collective way to tribally identify with a unifying narrative, stimulating the social unconscious. Which specific communication mechanisms did you trigger here? And what kind of personal feedback and press reactions did you get back?
I believe what really worked was the presentation of a dream net overlaid with a technological net. Rather than being the unconscious image of someone, This Man is the unconscious desire of the web, it shows a lack in the internet's real time omnipresence. Obviously the identikit worked as a pop icon and it's now a perfect example of "convergence culture", as Henry Jenkins said. Everything has slipped away from the author and now I'm his first fan. I see Brazilian punk hardcore singers who have his face on tattoo on the calf, Japanese teenagers making videos dressed up like him, an Indian guru who is convinced he is him in the dreams of the people, a kid hanging fliers of This Man in Arabic in Bagdad, a city still marked by bombs... I let myself be

kidnapped by this disrupting dimension.

Social media has substantially changed the whole communication scenario and consequently the way of campaigning. You used classic meme-related tactics with Ryanfair and the petition 'Say no to David Bowie dead'. What kind of results did you obtain? And how do you think social media are elaborated in the advertisement industry?
RyanFair was a fake developed and studied to highlight the matter of the responsibilities of the thousands of migrants who died while crossing the Mediterranean in some unlikely boats. Say No To David Bowie dead is the absolute nothing, it was just a post on Facebook to make my friends smile and it has become one of my most viral things ever. It was made the same day of the attack at the Blue Mosque and I was shocked to find this stupid petition as real news on the Turkish media with the news of the 13 victims of Istanbul.
The boom of RyanFair was due to a serious leak of Dpa, the German press agency that bounced the news. If it wasn't for them, the fake news about Ryan Air allowing the migrants to fly without visa wouldn't have come to the media's attention. Unfortunately, it's an escalation to the bottom, where the traditional and social media tend to refrain from complexity.
The advertising simply adjusts itself to this reality. But I think the most responsible are the information world and the institutions.

21st century propaganda seems to have similar appropriative trajectories to the 20th century ones. The memes, first a popular online phenomenon, have then been used as a propaganda tool by anonymous movement and now by the alt-right; similarly the 'fake news', embodiment of the 'semiological guerrilla' in the seventies, were first popularised in the form of online 'news satire' and now being carelessly assembled in the liquid 'post-truth' concept. In your view are memes and fake part of ever-recurring cycles of tactics? Or given the unavoidable total ubiquity of news we'd expect new sophisticated linguistic forms?
The art and the guerrilla have a mission to move beyond the boundaries every time the

territories change. The concept of post-truth is still vague and needs more investigation and definition, but it owns a real consistence, it isn't just a new journalism word. The fake-news, even when they are just funny, make a superficial and instrumental use of the fake. I think there is still some space for what Bruce Sterling with a nice intuition called Design Fiction: "the deliberate use of diegetic prototypes to suspend disbelief about change". The difference between the fake news and the design fiction is the same between a joke and an illusion game. The illusionist challenges us to understand the complexity of the game, he doesn't simply say "or it's fake or it's magic". Then, I believe it will be necessary to move the limit again. Maybe we should develop a post-fake manifesto.

Finally, you were also an active part of the Luther Blisset project (among the various initiatives you were part of, I remember a famous party on a Rome public transport bus, live streamed through a radio station, and then interrupted by the police). Do you still see a role for collective names in the age of social media?
It is possible to make a history of the pseudonyms use from Nedd Ludd to Anonymous (as Marco De Seriis did in the book 'Improper Names') across Monty Cantsin, Karen Eliot and of course Luther Blissett. Definitely Anonymous is the largest and most advanced example, however I believe the lack of body substance both Nedd Ludd and Luther Blissett share is something we will deal with later on. The Blissett project had a focus on the identity dissolution in the net, but it was a project made of meetings, urban interventions, we can say it was a happening lasting some years. If there is something the collective names shouldn't lose in the age of social media, it's this collective dimension.
All the projects I mentioned in this interview originated from meetings, fights, loves and hangovers with so many other people.

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