

# DAVOR SANVINCENTI

(Croatia)

Before the first Light

November 16, 2012 – January 18, 2013



# BEFORE THE FIRST LIGHT

Inspired by poet Stéphane Mallarmé's phrase, "The virgin, vivid and beautiful today,"\* Croatian multimedia artist Davor Sanvincenti has for years used instant black and white photography and 16 mm film to make quiet records of the moment just before dawn, when the first ray of light falls on the landscape and starts filling in the blanks of an as-of-yet unwritten day.

During these dawns, Sanvincenti shoots just one photograph or one single-take reel of film. His images are created by an intention and a simple repeated ritual. They then cede their final faces to chance elements like temperature, light and emulsion processes.

The resulting images are, in the words of curator Marina Viculin, "vulnerable." "Magic lays within the tenderness of the moment, the gentleness of the light whose source, at the moment of shooting, was still under the horizon. There are no shadows, no contrast and everything is drowned in a common happiness of diffuse light. There is no differentiation... the world is just being born."

This fall, with support from CEC ArtsLink and the Ohio Arts Council, Sanvincenti spent 5 weeks in Cleveland as a SPACES World Artist Program (SWAP) artist-in-residence. Sanvincenti used his residency to extend his ongoing series, *Before the first Light*, to the natural landscapes surrounding Cleveland.

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\* "La vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui," from Stéphane Mallarmé's *Le Cygne*.

Sanvincenti's *Before the first Light* was created with assistance from The Impossible Project.

Sanvincenti's *Before the first Light* pieces included in this exhibition combine shots taken in Europe and Central Asia with ones taken in Cleveland, where he searched for small urban landscapes uncontaminated by buildings, electrical wires and other visual noise. The rarity of these sites in the Cleveland landscape serve to suspend these images even more dramatically in the dreamspace particular to dawn.

Sanvincenti's time in Cleveland was marked by a perfect storm of literal perfect storms, among them the dramatic weather brought to town by Hurricane Sandy. In many ways,

Sanvincenti's Cleveland works became reflections on impossibility and loss: changes of changes of an original intention.

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When plans to take 16 mm film of sunrise over a horizon of treetops in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park were aborted due to weather and scheduling conflicts, Sanvincenti

switched gears and instead created *Lost Cuyahoga Ocean* (11 minutes), a tribute to his lost translation of Cleveland's surrounding forests as oceanscapes. Instead, he composed the musical score that would have accompanied the film. It now permeates the exhibition space like a quiet ghost, and plays behind a 1930's era daguerreotype of a symphony that Sanvincenti found dusty and abandoned in France earlier this fall.

## ARTIST BIO

Davor Sanvincenti is an international multimedia artist, living and working in Zagreb, Croatia. Sanvincenti is interested in audiovisual research, and the conditions of human sensory perception. Sanvincenti works in film, video, photography, light and sound installations and live media performances. In 2010, Sanvincenti was the recipient of the Radoslav Putar Award for the best Croatian artist under 35. His work has been exhibited internationally, including the Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin/Madrid, LOOP /Barcelona, 25FPS /Zagreb, World Film Festival /Bangkok, VideoEX /Zurich, CineMed /Montpellier festivals; and venues including Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; HfG/ZKM, Karlsruhe; MoCA, Zagreb; Lincoln Center, New York; HB Galerie, Rotterdam; Joanneum Museum, Graz; NIU, Barcelona; La Triennale, Milano; MoCA Vojvodina, Novi Sad; Filmoteca Española, Madrid; Art Pavilion, Zagreb; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin. Sanvincenti's exhibition at SPACES opens simultaneous with an opening of separate work in the Before the first Light series at the FRAC Pays de la Loire in Nantes, France.

For more information, visit: <http://www.messmatik.net>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This is SWAP's 10th anniversary. Thanks to all who have gone before.



The SPACES World Artists Program (SWAP) offers residencies to international, national and local artists who explore and experiment. SWAP supports artists in the creation, presentation and discussion of new work, while facilitating opportunities for them to collaborate with artists and audiences in Northeast Ohio. Davor Sanvincenti is SPACES' 41st artist-in-residence as part of SWAP.

Davor Sanvincenti's residency was made possible in part by CEC ArtsLink. ArtsLink Residencies offers artists and arts managers from 32 overseas countries five-week residencies at non-profit arts organizations throughout the US. The program enables artists and communities across the US to share artistic practices with artists and arts managers from abroad and engage in dialogue that advances understanding across cultures.

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