

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2007

Contact: Renate Raymond

425.519.0754 or renater@bellevuearts.org

**The Garden of Things**
by *Studio Azzurro*
May 3 through September 2, 2007
at Bellevue Arts Museum

Bellevue, WA-Bellevue Arts Museum proudly presents the video installation *The Garden of Things* by Italian artistic research studio, *Studio Azzurro*. For over twenty years, *Studio Azzurro* has explored the artistic and expressive potential of recent technology. Through looping videos of luminous and fleeting images on six screens within a darkened gallery, *The Garden of Things* mobilizes a host of poetic allusions in a continuous shift between real and virtual elements.

On each screen, hands filtered through an infrared device appear as white silhouettes as they touch, caress, stroke, rub, brush, and manipulate a set of objects of different sorts according to an established succession and a progression. At the beginning, the cold objects cannot be made out on the screens. Through touch and manipulation, the heat of the hands is transferred to the each object, heating it up and rendering it visible. Touching is seeing. The hands, all together, seem to create their own world-whose very existence is guaranteed only by the nurturing and feeding relationship of the hands.

The gestures are accompanied by resonating sounds that add to the ambience of the installation and give space to the inner music of the interweaving gestures. Dragged out of darkness, the artists explain, “the image will persist as long as our care, our attention will

remain, only to 'cool' soon afterwards, disappear back into a darkness full of meaning and remain as a memory.” Another question however arises: How do we interpret what appears on the screen? Is it the image of the manipulated object or the imprint of the relationship between object and hand? As the artists expound “what is produced on the screen is the manifestation of a silent dialogue that the hand established with the element: the traces of heat tell the intensity, the energy of this relationship, the feeling involved”.

“This silent dialogue of the hand” says curator Stefano Catalani, “transposes the sensory experience into the visual domain. It is literally revelatory. It goes to the core of the creative act for it gives form for the eye and the mind to grasp. With cherishing and exploratory movements these hands embody the very idea of manipulation and creation both on the real and the virtual planes”.

Visitors can anticipate stepping into a dark room and feeling a sense of calm and peace as they are enveloped by the soft drum music and mesmerizing images.

Studio Azzurro is an artistic research studio, that bases its expression on the languages afforded by recent technology. It was first set up in 1982 by Fabio Cirifino (photography), Paolo Rosa (visual arts and film) and Leonardo Sangiorgi (graphics and animation). In 1995 Stefano Roveda, an expert in interactive systems, joined the group. For over twenty years, Studio Azzurro has been investigating the poetic and expressive potential of these systems that have had such an impact on relations in this age. Through video-environments, sensitive and interactive environments, theatrical performances and films, it has blazed a trail that is now acknowledged worldwide, by countless major artistic and theatrical institutions and events. In addition to experimental work, the groups activities are also tied in with more formative experiences such as the designing of museums and theme exhibitions whose cultural value has been recognized at all levels. In both cases, Studio Azzurro has taken care to create communicative environments that require an active and significant participation on behalf of the spectator who is part of the narrative structure, inspired by a use of multi-textual approach and a continuous shift between virtual and real elements.

Two catalogs are available in the Museum Store " Studio Azzurro Immagini Vive" and " Studio Azzurro. Videoambienti, ambienti sensibili e altre esperienze tra arte, cinema, teatro e musica "

This exhibition was made possible in part by the Microsoft Corporation.

Bellevue Arts Museum

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of the fine art of craft and design through exhibitions, partnerships and education activities with an emphasis on regional craft artists as part of the national and international conversation on fine craft and design. Bellevue Arts Museum is located at 510 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue, WA 98004.

Admission price \$7 adults and \$5 for seniors and \$5 students. The Museum's main information line is 425.519.0770 and website is www.bellevuearts.org. For more information: Renate Raymond, Bellevue Arts Museum, 425.519.0754 or renater@bellevuearts.org

###