

»*Eratnac imetaishal* is the name of a video work by Sophia Pompéry which the jury has singled out for an award: on the street in a small Italian town, a young woman (Sophia Pompéry herself!) sings one of the most famous hits of the postwar era, *Lasciate mi cantare* by Toto Cutugno. The singer's pronunciation sounds peculiar, curious tones can be heard in the background. After a short time the viewer notices that the film actually is running backwards, which logically means that the singer has also sung the song backwards. But after one discovers this subtle trick (an accomplished performance, linguistically and musically) – after the initial surprise, that is – interest in the rest of the video is by no means exhausted – on the contrary! As a viewer, one pays still more attention to the details, to the passers-by who stand around, speak with each other or walk (naturally, all backwards!), to the cars, the delivery men and the many small defamiliarized moments that make up the life of a small town. What suddenly becomes visible in this video piece is urban life, which doesn't consist of built structures but is fleeting, made up of movements, shouts, looks, dreams, shocks and collisions among the protagonists, whether human beings, objects or animals. *Eratnac imetaishal* also reminds me of Italo Calvino's famous work *Invisible Cities*. Calvino describes the chain of human activity, the arbitrary and unconnected deeds that make up the constantly changing weave of urban life so that »at every moment the unhappy city contains a happy city unaware of its own existence.« This video work was created for an exhibition at the Goethe Institute in Rome: A German artist imports Italian goods back to Italy, takes up the street singer tradition once again, but does so backwards, or more precisely, as a mirror image. In recent years, the artist has dealt repeatedly with the theme of mirroring, symmetry and the inversion of values, systems and forms. The jury was especially impressed that a young artist can on the one hand be so logically consistent in her way of thinking, and on the other so versatile in her aesthetic solutions.«

Jean-Baptiste Joly,

Mart Slam Förderpreis awards ceremony, 23 October 2008