

BENNI BOSETTO

EMANUELA CAMPOLI

BENNI BOSETTO

Benni Bosetto's artistic practice has always been centered on the transformation and deconstruction of the body. Through drawing, installation, sculpture, and performance, the artist explores the human condition by examining the role of ritual and ceremonial objects in today's society. Her research projects into the observation of the body and its living space as radical instruments of freedom investigating the concepts of rest and sexuality, transforming this fields into a fertile ground for imagination and the production of new visions of reality. Using a pre-logical visual language, Bosetto appeals to the construction of a code of unconscious images drawn from a collective memory, where the represented subjects are lost and dissolve, becoming parts of a fragmented and composite whole. Bosetto reveals apparently restrictive architecture – caves, cells, domestic and exhibition spaces as fluid and welcoming places, in an act of poetic reconnection with our bodies and their vital forces. Through sculptures, drawings, and environments, the artist proposes a systemic view of the body as a conductor of multiple realities and narratives, continually interacting with its environment. Bosetto mixes materials and images, crafting a careful balance between opacity and figuration, innocence and play. She creates afterimages of a sexuality that goes beyond genital parameters and eludes univocal classifications, challenging constructions of nature, gender, and crime, as well as the (mis)conception of certain behaviours as being 'against nature'. These bold elements are contrasted against spaces of intimacy and retreat.

Her work is currently on view in her solo exhibition *Rebecca* at Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan (12.02 - 19.07.2026).

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Fondazione Fiera, Milan
MUDEC, Museo Termoli, Milan
Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Torino
Fondazione Maison Valentino, Rome
Fondazione San Patrignano, Coriano, Italy
Fondazione CDP, Rome



Rebecca

Pirelli HangarBicocca

February 12 - July 19 2026

Curated by Fiammetta Griccioli, “Rebecca” is the Italian artist’s first major institutional exhibition. The title is inspired by the 1938 novel of the same name by English writer and playwright Daphne du Maurier (1907–1989). In the novel, the real protagonist is a house that preserves the memory of a deceased woman named Rebecca, who lived there.

The house in the novel, just like the display at Pirelli HangarBicocca, becomes a true architectural female body, a living organism. The name Rebecca, whose etymology refers to “bond” or “union”, alludes to welcoming, gathering, and retaining – acts that are central to Bosetto’s poetics of merging the body and environment in an intimate, continuous relationship.

The exhibition project transforms the Shed space by evoking a domestic and welcoming environment, where rooms, walls, and surfaces seem to come alive, giving the space a private and inhabited dimension. It is both a place and a statement: at an historical moment when everything is dominated by production speed, Bosetto invites us to reclaim our subjective time, a time for dreaming, resting, and regaining our imagination.

The space conceived by Bosetto becomes at once an intimate place and a political act. Visitors are welcomed into a dreamlike landscape where every element evokes the desire to imagine, and where erotic and pleasure-related signs form the backdrop to a refuge in which everyone can rediscover themselves, free from social conditioning.

Another key element of Bosetto’s artistic practice is the physical creation of his work through long hours of manual labor. Each drawing is created by hand by the artist over the course of several months. Every ornament, every decoration devoid of functional purpose within the domestic space, takes on symbolic value. Ultimately, her entire artistic practice aims to achieve one outcome: providing shelter from the urgency and pressure of linear time. Here, visitors can daydream and have the freedom to imagine and affirm their present and future.



Rebecca, Installation view, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan



Rebecca, Installation view, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan



Rebecca, Installation view, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan



Rebecca, Installation view, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan



Rebecca, Installation view, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan



Rebecca, Installation view, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan



Rebecca, Installation view, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan



Rebecca, Installation view, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan

On Decay and Rebirth

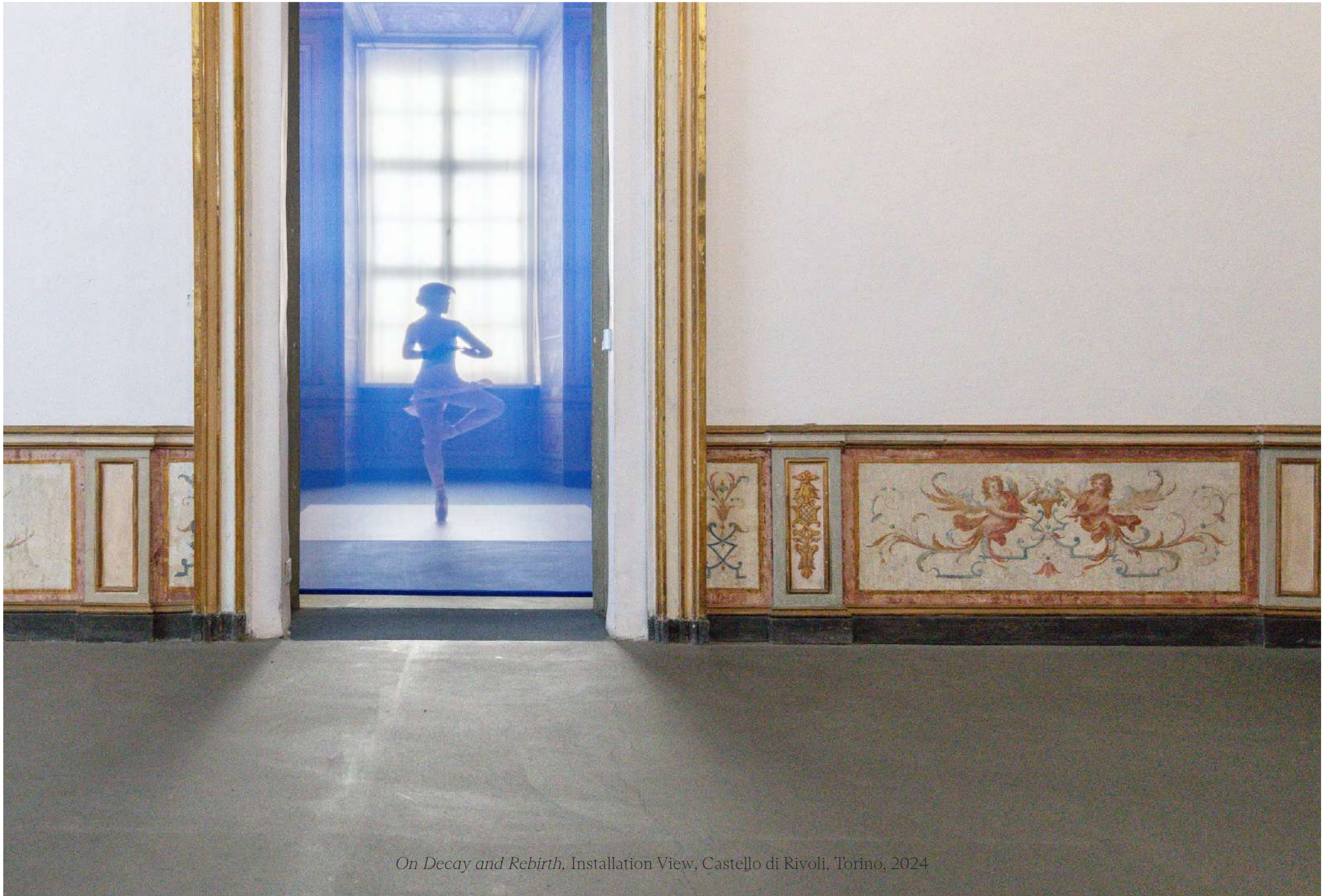
Castello di Rivoli, Torino, Italy
23 Mars 2024

During the week of the spring equinox, Castello di Rivoli hosts *On Decay and Rebirth*, a day dedicated to celebrating the generative power of art and nature. The Museum's galleries, the theater, and the eighteenth-century atrium will come alive with contemporary artists and writers through screenings, performances, and readings focusing on metamorphosis, coexistence, and rebirth.

Benni Bosetto's artistic practice has always focused on the transformation and deconstruction of the body. For the occasion of *On Decay and Rebirth*, the artist presents *TANGO!*, 2024, an unprecedented performance that unfolds in the exhibition spaces of the collection in three moments: from the melancholy of a solitary heart, an interspecies tango will invade different rooms of the Museum, culminating in a cathartic living carillon. The work aims to initiate a reflection on infatuation as a process of intoxication and on the corporeality of feelings, playing with clichés and archetypes associated with love.

On Decay and Rebirth, Performance Image at Castello di Rivoli, Torino, Italy





On Decay and Rebirth, Installation View, Castello di Rivoli, Torino, 2024



Slippery Orchid

Emanuela Campoli, Milan

23 November 2023 - 07 June 2024

Emanuela Campoli is pleased to announce its second exhibition in Milan. 'Slippery Orchid' is a carte blanche given to artist Benni Bosetto to play with the limits between art, the body, and the mutability of the different environments that constitute the apartment at 48, Foro Bonaparte.

When the mind travels beyond the body, one can experience an oceanic feeling. Bodily boundaries become slippery and overflow into other places and people, bringing them close, almost as if to touch them. At best, this feeling creates an indissoluble bond between oneself and the 'external' world, the power to be one with it and to see it as a whole. This sensation can be experienced in different ways, through a movement of contraction, release and relaxation, like the motion of waves in the sea – the same movement that occurs in the body during an orgasm. Psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich – a controversial and far-seeing intellectuals of the twentieth century who dedicated his life to understanding the complex link between sexuality and freedom – argued that this 'orgastic' movement is not limited to itself. While releasing a wave of fluid and libidinous energy capable of dissolving the rigid, defensive 'armour' built by trauma and unhappiness, it also generates connections with deeper vital currents. This can lead humans to feel something akin to the pulsating moves of a jellyfish, the peristaltic squirms of a worm, or the division of cells; evoking in us a sense of unity with other worlds. According to Reich, this energy can liberate not only the human body but also the public body, alleviating violence and conflicts. However utopian and controversial, Reich's ideas were not without practical foundations. His thinking was instrumental in the struggle for sexual liberation, helping to separate sex from the act of procreation and as an instrument of control. Although orgasms are not enough to stop oppression, according to Reich, they could play a fundamental role in breaking down the 'armour' we carry, to reconcile with our natural environments.

It is in the conception of the body as an object whose freedom is limited and, at the same time, an instrument of liberation in its own right that rests Benni Bosetto's practice. With Slippery Orchid, Bosetto reveals apparently restrictive architecture – caves, cells, domestic and exhibition spaces – as fluid and welcoming places, in an act of poetic reconnection with our bodies and their vital forces. Through sculptures, drawings, and environments, the artist proposes a systemic view of the body as a conductor of multiple realities and narratives, continually interacting with its environment.

In a series of drawings, bodies unfold into one another, merging the vegetal and the wild. Their scenes seem to recall the emotional liberation that Reich termed 'streaming', wherein the touching of specific points in the body during guided medical sessions released stagnant and hidden emotions. Dark and intense lines, some liquid and diaphanous, enclose a disturbing atmosphere, at times lightened by ornamental motifs and playful elements, including beads, puppets, and kittens.

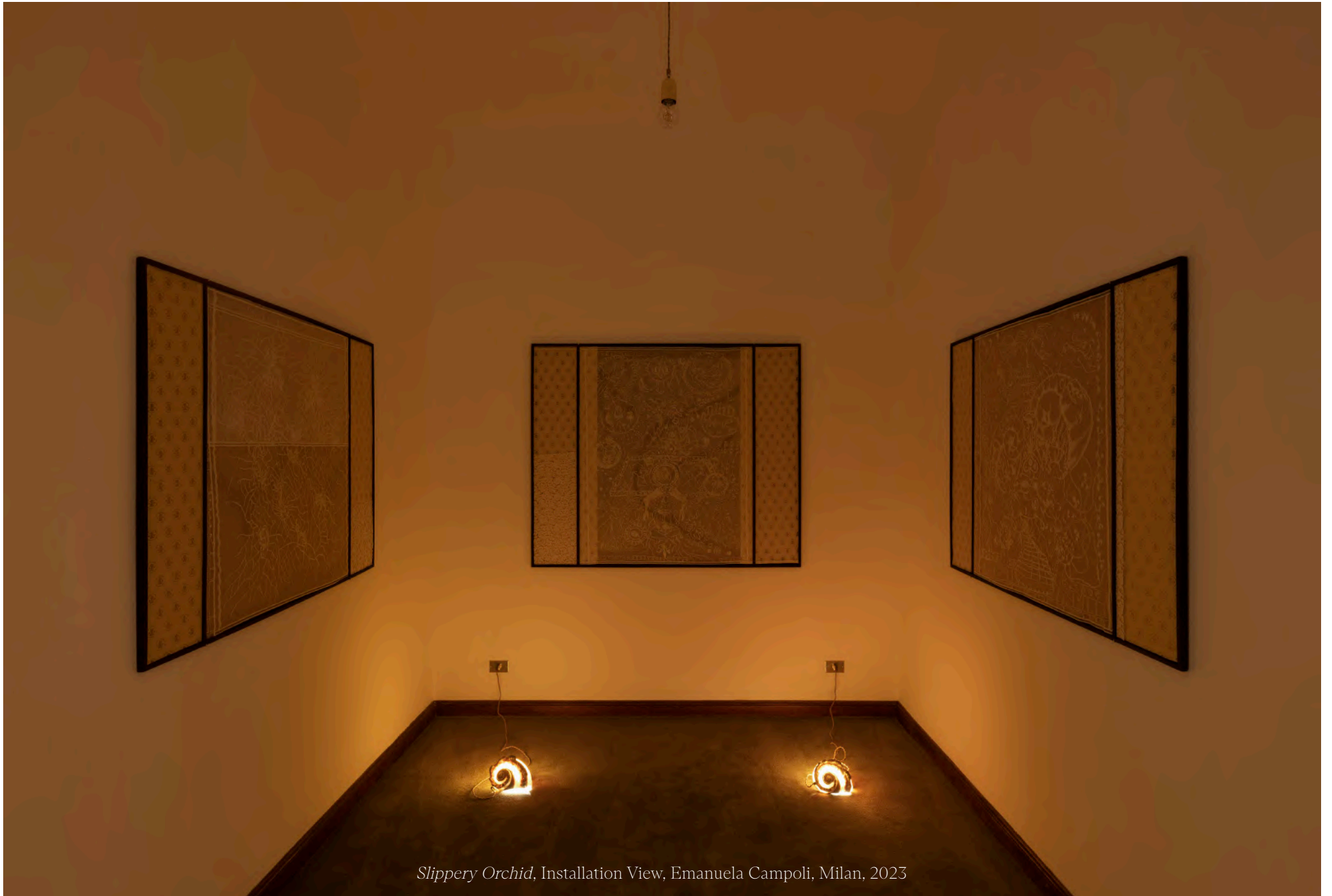
The boundaries between worlds are further blurred through sculptures and installations that reflect seduction and naivety. Biting bronze filaments cover the walls draped in sagging lace, forming structures that draw inspiration from feline toys. The figure of the cat, seen both as a wild animal and a companion and as a symbol of a dangerous woman (the witch, the femme fatale, the sex worker), further abolishes set roles and binary distinctions between the human and the animal, the domestic and the wild. Bosetto mixes materials and symbols, crafting a careful balance between opacity and figuration, innocence and play. She creates afterimages of a sexuality that goes beyond genital parameters and eludes univocal classifications, challenging constructions of nature, gender and crime, as well as the (mis)conception of certain behaviours as being ‘against nature’.

These bold elements are contrasted against spaces of intimacy and retreat. Laced works hide subtle symbols and pencil drawings – spaces through which stories flow in rivers. At the entrance, silhouettes of locks printed on lace curtains evoke veiled scenarios, alluding to the secret and the private. A bronze branch with winding lines shaped like the letter Z reference the waves of breath during sleep. This branch contains the figure of a Vespertilio Bruno, one of the animals that sleeps the most in the world, signalling a change of atmosphere: an invitation to take care, to rest and to recover.

At the centre of the exhibition space the artist presents a series of wooden cells inspired by Reich's Orgone Accumulators. Initially conceived by Reich as healing devices where one could sit in solemn self-confinement, the cells are redesigned by the artist as hosting spaces for visitors and for the works of other artists. These interstitial and cavernous places, which feel both protected and loving, (as suggested by their heart-shaped seats), become sites to let go of the structures imposed by coercive morals, a place to form new unions.

In my last encounter with Benni Bosetto, we both carried the footprints of two islands that hosted us: visions and glares that manifested physically and imaginatively on us, which still return to me today as I write this text. Among the protagonists of this oceanic feeling is a flower that the artist encountered on the island – the Cypripedioideae or ‘Slipper Orchid’ – from which the exhibition title stems. What distinguishes this flower is its sac, which invites insects to enter and receive the pollen necessary for its fertilisation. Inside this humid and hairy space – which feels like a trap but also a gentle organ – possibilities for new life emerge. By re-imagining different organic architectures, Bosetto reclaims spaces for liquid bodies, offering an intimate journey through the liberated body as a naked source of power.

– Giulia Civardi



Slippery Orchid, Installation View, Emanuela Campoli, Milan, 2023



Benni Bosetto

I just know that something good is going to happen 1, 2023

Rosewood and fir wood, steel wool, glass fibre, galvanized
aluminium, wooden stool

65 × 160 × 70 cm / 25.6 × 63 × 27.5 inches



Benni Bosetto
I just know that something good is going to happen 1, 2023
Detail



Benni Bosetto

I just know that something good is going to happen 2, 2023

Rosewood and fir wood, steel wool, glass fibre, galvanized aluminium,
wooden stool

52 × 125 × 50 cm / 20.4 × 49.2 × 19.6 inches



Benni Bosetto

I just know that something good is going to happen 4, 2023

Rosewood and fir wood, steel wool, glass fibre, galvanized aluminium

82 × 82 × 22 cm / 32.2 × 32.2 × 8.6 inches

Cheyney Thompson

TouchTime [10, 13] //écorché, 2021

Graphite on paper mounted on museum board

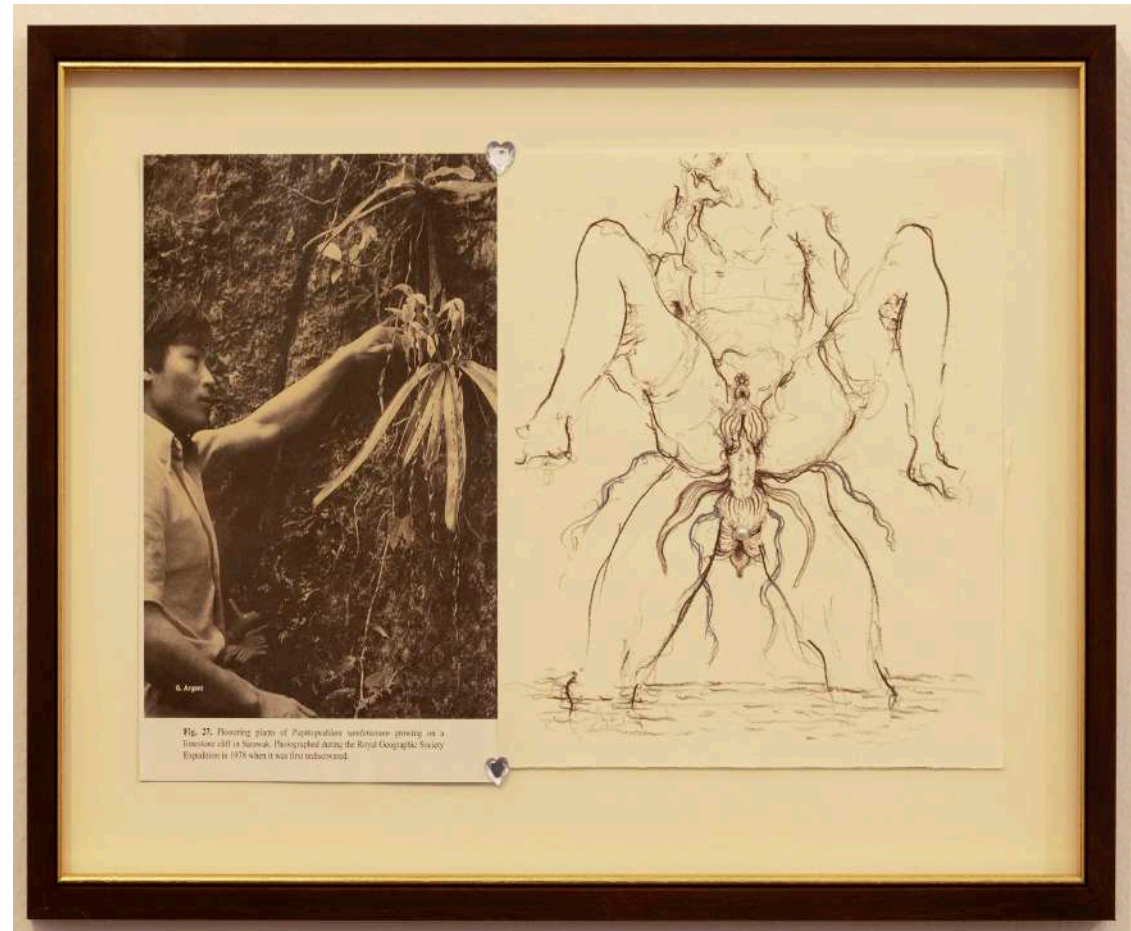
65.8 × 50 cm / 25.91 × 19.66 inches



Slippery Orchid, Installation View, Emanuela Campoli, Milan, 2023



Benni Bosetto
Lussuria ondeggia come oro, 2023
 Pencil and collage on paper, artist's frame
 30 × 35 × 2 cm / 11.8 × 13.8 inches



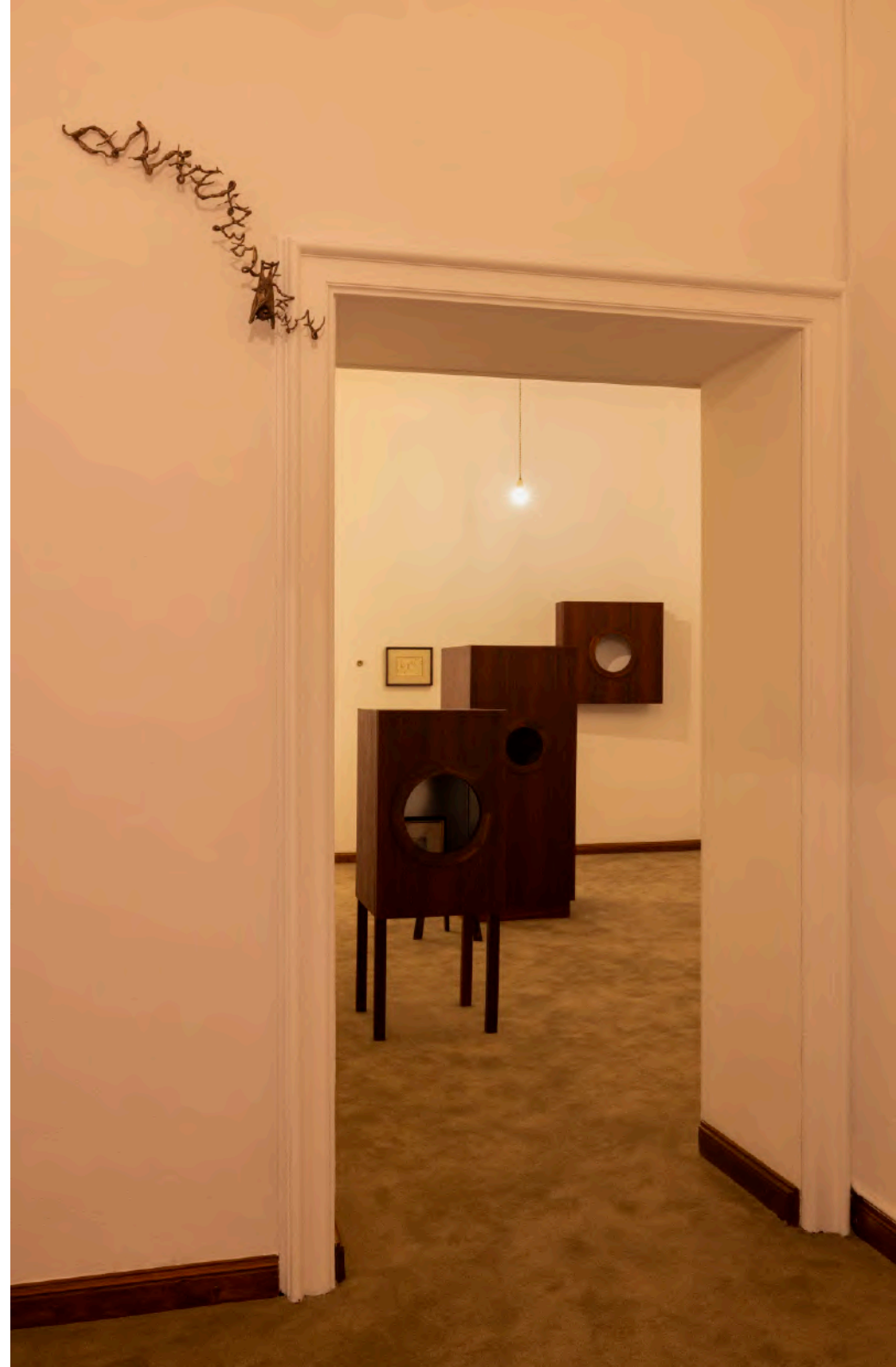
Benni Bosetto
Oceano di succo, 2023
 Red chalk pencil on paper, artist's frame
 44 × 55 cm / 17.3 × 21.6 inches



Slippery Orchid, Installation View, Emanuela Campoli, Milan, 2023



Slippery Orchid, Installation View, Emanuela Campoli, Milan, 2023



a l e i

Benni Bosseto

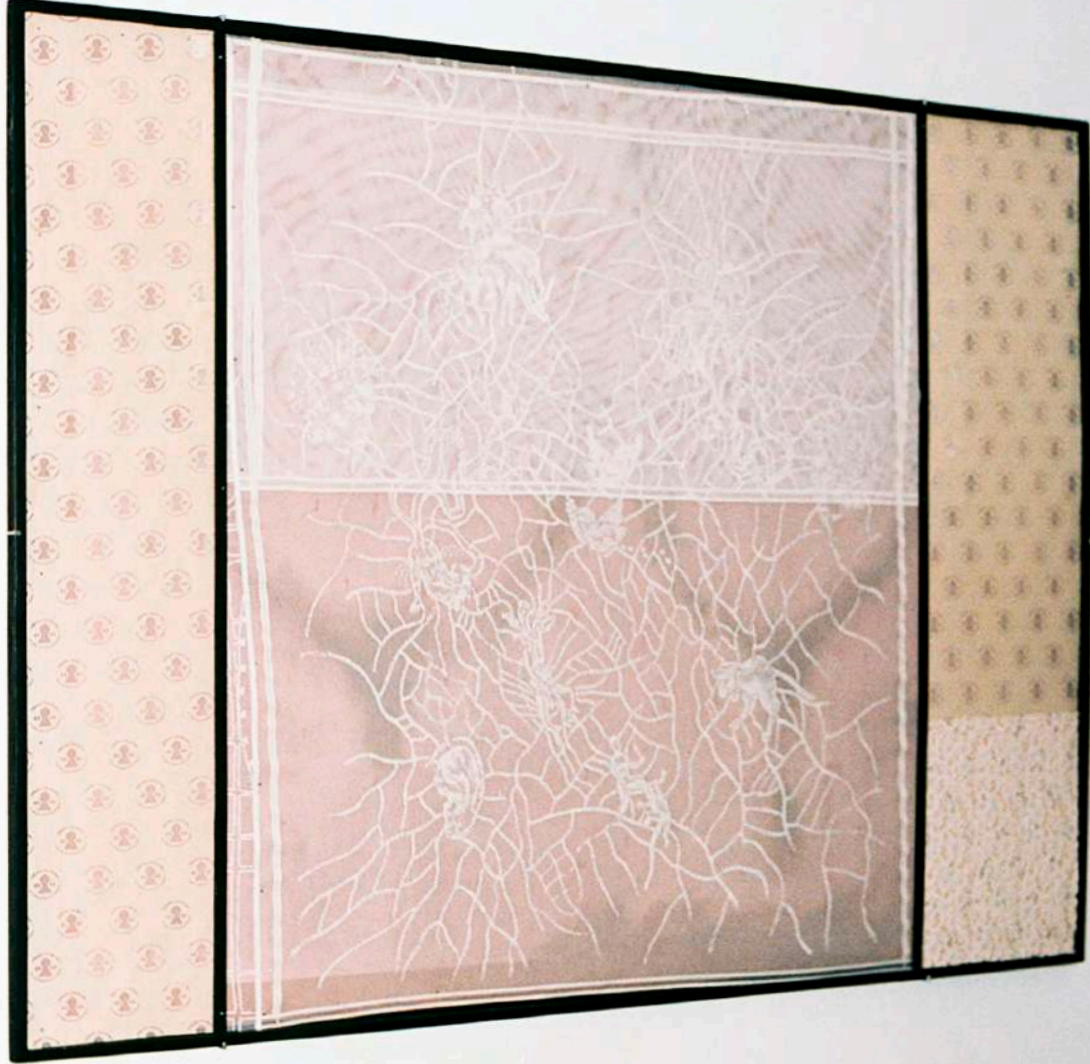
interview by Mélodie Zagury

courtesy of the artist

and Campoli Presti Milan

photography by Adrianna Glaviano



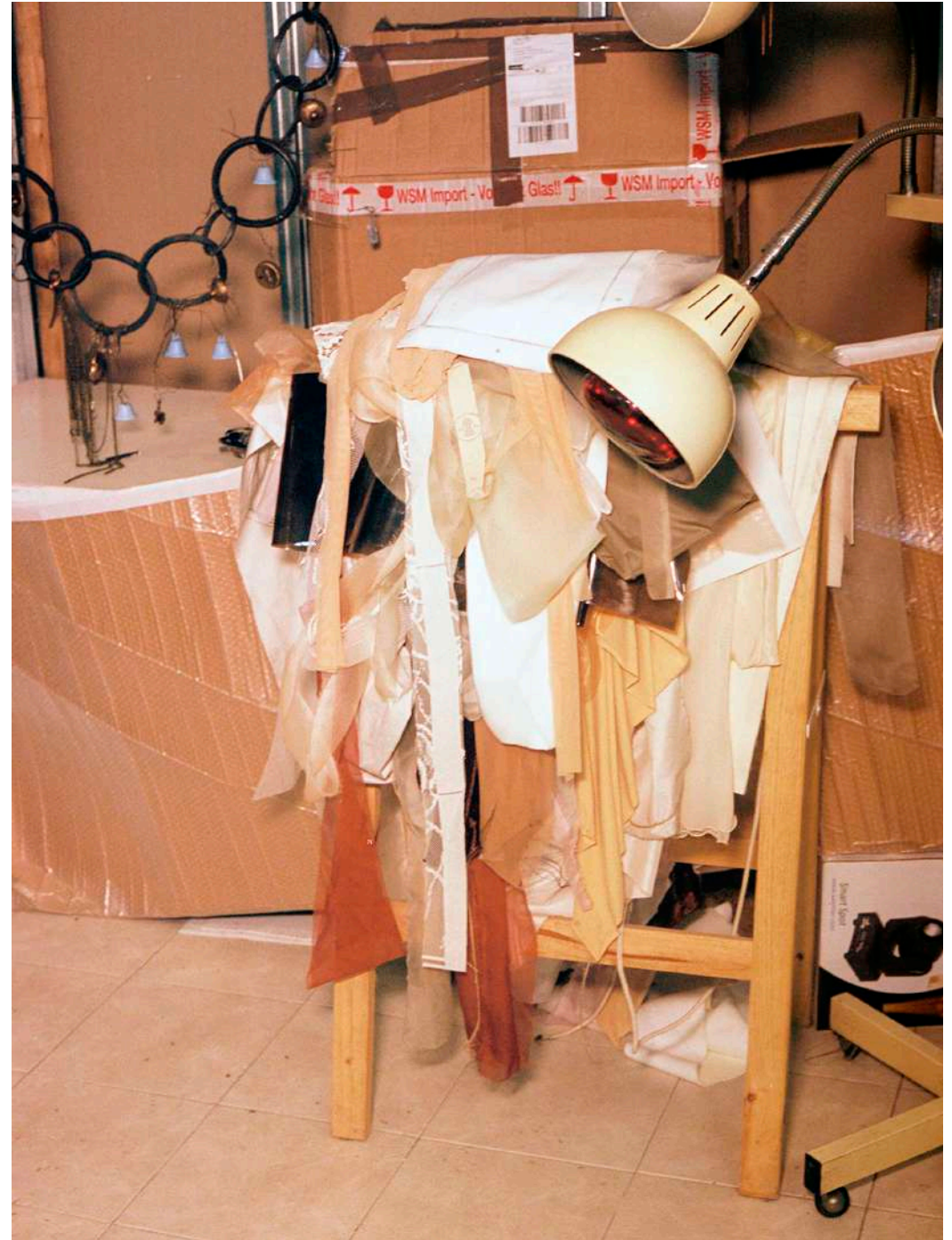


My practice has always focused on the development of synesthetic visions, they are like apparitions seeking to create a system that tends to alter the reality of the public in relation to a space. I am mostly interested in the body and all of its connections, let's say a hyper body, spiritual and physical. But I always keep the doors wide open. I consider it essential to try to dismantle the comforting structures through the disconnection of logic. For instance, in the construction of my drawings, I love embracing and celebrating nonsense, absurdity, and dreamlike images in the free form of poetry, immersing myself in a surreal language. I personally think that art must try to break up the torrential bulimic side of information. It is like chewing, ingesting, digesting and transforming everything that is around you like a sort of chlorophyll photosynthesis in thought forms like the Annie Besant visions. I would say that I have a systemic vision of the body as a conductor of multiple realities and narratives, in continuous interaction with its environment. However I move the narrative discourse. I am interested in the liquid, lymphatic, nervous, emotional, esoteric organicity between me and the environment that surrounds me, people, things, rivers, everything. However, these are "messages" that I intend to leave intrinsic in my work; I do not wish to explain them. I prefer to keep all things open and suspended. I try to leave a sense of lightness. This is why I almost always leave my sculptures suspended from the ground and my drawings without a clear perspective. In *American Lessons*, Calvino asks how we can save ourselves from what is most fragile at a time when the human realm appears condemned to an increasingly ruthless and dense drama. For him, the greatest commitment goes to the figure of the poet, who "has the task of lifting himself from the heaviness of the world by demonstrating that its gravity contains the secret of lightness, while what many believe to be the vitality of the times, noisy, aggressive, stamping and roaring, it belongs to the realm of death, like a cemetery of rusty cars". Calvino strongly advises the new generations of the millennium to guard against the danger of the petrification of humanity and to do like Perseus, defeat Medusa by suspending themselves from the wind and clouds. He advises us to look and trust what is light. I start working with lots of doubts and dilemmas, thinking about where to start and start again, where to stop, to grasp a part of the "useful" reality. I have this feeling of uncontrollable uncertainty and confusion that has become part of my daily life together with a sense of absurdity. I am referring to the kind of doubts that have the capacity to confirm and affirm life. Paradoxically, in these moments of uncertainty, the sensation is to feel more alive because it is a human purpose to seek intrinsic logic in what we do and in who we are. Clinging to a particular sensation is often the starting point from which I begin a new piece or research. But it is increasingly difficult to understand a way of working, especially now that I have to work on multiple projects at the same time. They are often different projects and

thus must be organized differently. I like to think that each work has its own personality, its own character. Sometimes the work is more instinctive and playful, while with performative projects, the process becomes more complex, more voracious, and more collaborative. Spaces and places speak to me. Often the vision for an artwork emerges from associating specific thoughts with a specific space. I think thoughts can move invisible things. Last year I became passionate about the figure of Wilhelm Reich, one of the most controversial intellectuals of the 20th century who fought throughout his life for the liberation of the body through sexuality and furthermore he believed orgasm was the main source of energy that connects the body to the deepest and most archaic forms. I thought that it was somehow important to reintroduce his thoughts, in a historical moment such as the one, in which the body is placed at the center of radical politics, becoming a terrain of confrontation, of violence, of censorship, of transformations. I became obsessed with his inventions and theories, which were considered non-conformist and revolutionary in his time. His book *The Function of the Orgasm* therefore became the starting point for the creation of my latest drawings and sculptures. It is tiring for me to concentrate on specific crystalline themes that characterize my practice. As a child, I was very interested in psychology and the study of behavior. I was passionate about ballet, and the body became a sort of obsession for me. I loved the rigor and discipline of the body but at the same time as I lived throughout my childhood immersed in the forest that surrounded my house, I was also very wild and alone. Being isolated from others like me led me to imagine fictitious alliances with the objects and environment around me. Through games, these surroundings were transformed into what I might call "parallel" realities. Perhaps this is still what influences my work. One of my latest performance projects *TANGO!* was a commission for the Castello di Rivoli. A project that was born within a context linked to the theme of hybridization and toxicity. For this occasion I wanted to start a reflection on the idea of falling in love as a process of intoxication and on the corporeality of sentimental feelings, playing with clichés and archetypes associated with love. But it happened somewhat by chance. I was reading a book, *Love Bug* by Daisy Lafargue. It was a coincidence that this book touched on points that interfaced with the project. But I cannot tell you how this particular kind of dance (tango) came to my mind. The connection happened naturally. I do not think it is necessary to force your thinking. Especially in my practice. There are sparks, enlightening visions which become crystal clear and then things go by themselves. Connections were created later, for example by talking with the dancers. A woman complained, for instance, that this dance form often requires the woman to follow the man's steps. While it may adhere to the romantic cliché of love, tango also has an extremely cruel side. The first time I visited a real Milonga, I felt a sense of anguish. Initially, I could not understand

why. Then, the next day, I read an article about the legend of the tango of death. A cruel genocidal game occurred in a concentration camp in Ukraine, where for an entire day, a tango song was played in a loop by a group of musicians. Eventually, they were killed one by one until the end of the performance.

A few years ago a clairvoyant told me about a past life I had, in which I lived for a period in Paris as a dancer at the opera house. I was told that I was then forced to flee because of the war. He also told me about another life in which I was an English journalist and my lover was a theater actress who died burned inside of a theater in Paris. He told me I was a slave, very powerful with a big heart, that I had been locked inside a pyramid till death.









Another clairvoyant in Switzerland told me there was no humanity in my next lives, only wild animals and forests. I am intrigued by the concept of embodying almost infinite pieces of other lives and memories. Similar to a fluid container of a dissolved corporeity. I am fascinated by this vision of fragmentation. I am nearly certain this could be a useful perspective. As an artist I believe it is somehow a duty to trust, as children do, in the invisible networks that weave through life, connecting stories and events that reside in the interstices of everyday life. I am viscerally fascinated by connecting facts, even if they are distant and seemingly unrelated. I cannot say precisely whether to interpret this as a message, but it is certainly a vision that I want to emphasize in my work. It gives me a sense of lightness and freedom. Not feeling the weight of the uniqueness, of the finiteness, or the end of something. In the end I believe that the goal lies precisely in the search for freedom. Freedom allows for the transmission of layers upon layers of messages without the need for conscious awareness. To evoke my inspirations, I would say that I believe I have a filtering function. I attempt to create hyper connections between readings that interest me, but the readings derive from personal research that are often instinctive and empathetic. It is always a concatenation of things that comes from the outside. At times, these connections materialize, are mentioned, or remain in the unconscious without needing to be actively remembered. Furthermore, it is possible for a work to be influenced by memories of a person's appearance, a sentence they said, or the combination of their attire. I possess a rather absorbent bulimic attitude. I save phrases, I buy objects that I keep in my studio for years. For example, I have been collecting ruined dolls houses since a couple of years, but I have not yet found their purpose and who knows if there will ever be one, but I like to have them in my studio, I like looking at them. Currently they are stacked on top of each other, forming a column of empty rooms. In the meantime, however, since I started collecting these houses I have been looking for books and watching films that have "the house" as the protagonist — Clarice Spector's *The Chandelier*, The apartment of Billy Wilder, *Dogtooth* of Yorgos Lanthimos and above all I have been fascinated since high school by Luis Bunuel's *The exterminating Angel* in which the guests are invited to a dinner in an upperclass family and for a series of surreal reasons they are unable to leave their home. I also have a great fascination for classic thriller clichés — those with seemingly identical plots, characters, and voices, yet I could watch them endlessly. I read a lot of poetry, I do not ask for anything from poetry, I think it is just nutritious, like food. Exhibitions, on the other hand, are a way of being together with people and creating connections within the community I belong to and have chosen. I love visiting art museums here in Milan, I love to go in solitude, by myself. I could spend long hours there. Museo Poldi Pezzoli is my

favorite, it seems like this space is living under a spell, filled with ghosts and spirits. I usually collect photographic images with my phone of the details that strike me most: hands, legs, glances, still lifes and details of gardens in the various pictorial backgrounds. Here in Milan, where I live and work, I often go to Pinacoteca di Brera. I have been going there since my time in art school, and even before, with my imagination. My father during my childhood described to me in detail many times the memory of the day he saw Mantegna's *Dead Christ* (il Cristo Morto) for the first time. He described it with such emphasis that I wanted to see it at all costs. I would say that it was definitely a moment of pure epiphany when I first found myself in front of this painting. But I believe my true epiphany about art occurred at the age of 10. When I was a child I was passionate about ballet. My mother allowed me to take the bus alone, it was mostly filled with elderly people and I was the only child. They were those usual municipal services for the retired. And from my small country village (Montevecchia) I went to La Scala theater in Milan. It was thrilling for me. I would get all dressed up, I would put on the most beautiful dress. I knew it was a very serious thing. I remember Balanchine, *The Nutcracker*, Sylph, Giselle, Swan Lake (three times), *Cinderella*, *Don Quichotte*. I think that is how my love for art was born. When discussing freedom, particularly the freedom of the body, as in the case of my latest show *Slippery Orchid* at the Emanuela Campoli Gallery in Milan, in which I reconstructed the Orgone accumulators designed by Wilhelm Reich, a series of somehow utopian wooden cells whose function was to break down the "armor" that we carry with us, for a reconciliation with our most ancient nature through the accumulation of vital energy, which Reich identified as sexual orgasmic energy, also known as Orgone energy. I believe that reintroducing his ideas today, which were burned, censored, and banned during the Nazi regime in the Second World War, constitutes a highly political act. I believe that reconstructing these unusual healing instruments can provide valuable insights into the ongoing development of our society that is in constant transformation. However, I do not always engage with such clear and declared things in my work. This serves as an example but is not constant in my work. Therefore, I do not believe it is mandatory for an artist to use explicitly political language. In general I think that art should be a place of freedom, free from any type of censorship or regulation. Political language is a level that derives as a consequence. For the future, I do not think I want to know exactly where I want to go, I prefer surprises. I always have so many ideas. I often have to stop myself. Sometimes those ideas manage to integrate with external reality, with what comes from the outside. However, sometimes it does not happen, and it remains as pure, energetic desire. Vital development occurs through the stimulation of the particles within our bodies by both visible and invisible external bodies. Therefore, I am determined to continue seeking

out this excitement that sustains both me and my artistic practice. Regarding everything else, I am not particularly concerned with the specifics. I believe I do not need to know until it is known. I am about to present a new line of erotic jewelry together with Valentina De Zanche. We named it MAGALINA, which is a tagal word that has stuck in our minds (since Valentina and I met in Manila, Philippines) and inspired us to create this slightly spicy yet definitely sexy-ironic project. However, this spring, I will be hosted by the Molaroni ceramists in Pesaro for the production of new sculptures, for a summer project curated by Attilia fattori Franchini. Throughout this summer, I will also participate in a group show at Centrale Fies, and in May, I will take part in a performance event at the Triennale theater in Milan.



che sarà sarà

Group Exhibition

Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo

Palazzo Re Rebaudengo, Guarene, Italy

23 September - 19 November 2023

The Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo is pleased to announce the opening of *che sarà sarà* on September 23rd – an exhibition that presents a diverse array of works by twenty artists active in Italy, spanning from sculpture, to installation, painting, and video art. Curated by Stefano Collicelli Cagol together with Michele Bertolino, the exhibition is realized with the support of the Comitato delle Fondazioni di Arte Contemporanea and opens during the Turin leg of *Bel Paese*, a project aimed at promoting and internationalizing the Italian art scene, born from the collaboration between the Comitato and the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity of the Ministry of Culture. The exhibition is part of SNODI.

che sarà sarà presents the works of artists who have deconstructed the concept of personal or collective identity, instead they have imagined expanded bodies and alternative landscapes, envisioned different and metamorphic times, and crafted stories with changeable outcomes. The title – a blend of the songs *Che sarà* by Ricchi e Poveri and *Que sera sera* – alludes to an undefined future, perhaps already occurred or still to come, evoking demobilization, disengagement from the self, and openness to possible events.

What is personal identity? Do we conform to a collective identity which allows us to be visible? Are there strategies to escape categorizations? Can we be opaque, elusive, hidden? The works in the exhibition suggest potential paths beyond the here and now inhabited by the individual body.

Betty Bee, Monica Bonvicini, Enrico David, Marco Giordano, and Kinkaleri situate identity within the body and interpret it as a realm of transformation, a sphere upon which the pressures of the social, urban, or natural context are exerted. It is a dark matter to shape, carve, and manipulate, with desires and urges acting as diversions. The body, both human and non-human animal, is subject to latent tensions: it is a space where a multitude of beings coexist, as elaborated in RM's work, or it is an organic, shifting object in the creations of Roberto Cuoghi and Giulia Cenci.

Bartira, Dafne Boggeri, and Caterina De Nicola discuss the coercive mechanisms of the political and social context we live in: by reclaiming memories of erased histories, they wear balaclavas to obscure themselves. In other instances, the balaclava

becomes a pen through which characters write their own stories – as recalled in Marinella Senatore's video. In the works of Stefano Arienti, Tomaso De Luca, and Eva Marisaldi, the gaze can deceive, showing us what isn't there – becoming a means through which to lose oneself, allowing one's boundaries to disintegrate.

Artists like Benni Bosetto, Isabella Costabile, Gino De Dominicis, Chiara Fumai, and Giulia Piscitelli explore the ritualistic, magical, and transcendent dimension of bodies and objects, showcasing the cosmological inspiration as strategies through which desires, thoughts, and actions are communalized, rewriting the dynamics of time.

che sarà sarà uncovers these themes in the works of Italian artists working between the '90s and the present day – attempting to reconstruct a potential scattered geography, hanging upside down by a thread, in which the languages of visual arts reveal their interactions with music, fashion, cinema, poetry, and underground culture. An exhibition where desires and impulses become instruments for getting lost, opportunities for shaping one's appearance, and mirrors in which to recognize new forms of community.

In addition to the exhibition, Palazzo Re Rebaudengo pays tribute to Marisa and Mario Merz, Gianfranco Baruchello, and Michelangelo Pistoletto, whose works come from the Foundations dedicated to their work which are part of the Committee.

The artwork *Urlo* by the collective Kinkaleri will be visible throughout the exhibition in numerous public displays spread across the municipality of Guarene. The work was realised thanks to the participation of the citizens of Guarene, in collaboration with the civic library and the Foundation's education department'.



che sarà sarà, Installation View, Fondazione Sandretto Re Baudengo, Guarene, Italy, 2023

che sarà sarà, Installation View, Fondazione Sandretto Re Baudengo,
Guarene, Italy, 2023

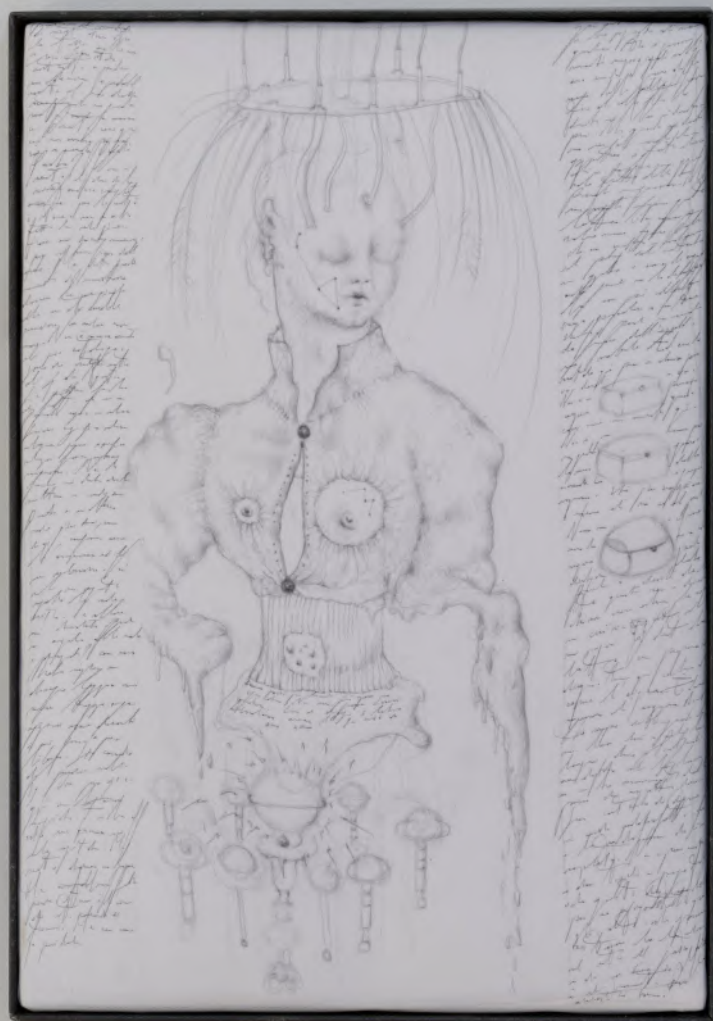


Le orecchie nelle sedie e la bocca nei cassetti
Villa di Geggiano, Siena, Italy
15 October 2022 - 28 January 2023





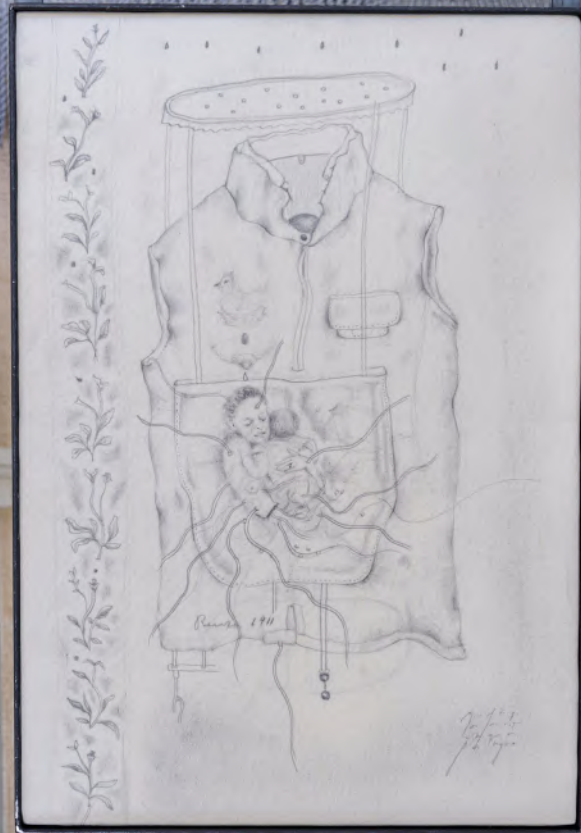
Le orecchie nelle sedie e la bocca nei cassetti, Installation View, Villa di Geggiano, Siena, 2022



Benni Bosetto
Untitled (I was just 6 years old), 2022
Pencil on silk, fabric, wadding, wood, iron
40 × 30 × 4 cm / 17 × 11.8 × 1.5 inches



Le orecchie nelle sedie e la bocca nei cassetti, Installation View, Villa di Geggiano, Siena, 2022



Benni Bosetto
Untitled (Candles sputtering their last magic), 2022
Pencil on silk, fabric, wadding, wood, iron
43 × 30 × 4 cm / 17 × 11.8 × 1.5 inches

Afterimage

Group Exhibition

MAXXI L'Aquila, L'Aquila

02 July 2022 - 19 February 2023

Curated by Bartolomeo Pietromarchi and Alessandro Rabottini

Francis Alÿs, Francesco Arena, Stefano Arienti, Benni Bosetto, Mario Cresci, June Crespo, Thomas Demand, Paolo Gioli, Massimo Grimaldi, Bronwyn Katz, Esther Kläs, Oliver Laric, Tala Madani, Anna Maria Maiolino, Marisa Merz, Luca Maria Patella, Hana Miletić, Luca Monterastelli, Frida Orupabo, Pietro Roccasalva, Mario Schifano, Elisa Sighicelli, Paloma Varga Weisz, Danh Vo, Dominique White, He Xiangyu.

A large international group show with 26 artists of different generations, composed of new commissions and site-specific installations, historical works from the MAXXI Collection, monographic rooms with works ranging from the 1960s to the present. *Afterimage* is a reflection in images on the themes of memory and metamorphosis, and looks at those forms, both material and metaphorical, by which what has passed remains around us and in us.

The title of the exhibition refers to the optical illusion called precisely *afterimage* (Italian for "residual image"), a phenomenon whereby a visual stimulus—such as a camera flash—produces an impression on the retina that persists even after its own passing.

Conceived as a visual poem, *Afterimage* is a reflection on the coexistence of permanence and transience as to a universal condition, rooted in the very nature of human existence, in the fate of artifacts, places, meanings and images.

The viewer is invited to make intuitive and spontaneous associations between the works, the history and architecture of the rooms of Palazzo Ardinghelli and the history of L'Aquila, a city that bears daily witness to the balance between memory of the past and the impulse for transformation and that makes manifest how much the principle of metamorphosis retains what has been and generates what will be. Moving through a wide variety of media, *Afterimage* includes photography and video, spatial interventions, paintings and sculptures and explores the intersections between fragmented iconographies, changing materials, perceptual memories and bodies in transformation.

The exhibition is traversed by four lines of narrative: the material and the memory, the shifting image, the unveiled body, and the inner architecture. Thus suggesting a formal and immaterial architecture within the physical architecture of the museum.



Benni Bosetto
Saturniidae, 2022
Iron, bronze, natural elements, ceramic
Variable dimensions



Tête en l'air

Campoli Presti, Paris

12 February - 02 April 2022

Campoli Presti is pleased to announce *Tête en l'air*, Benni Bosetto's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition presents a new series of works on silk alongside bronze and ceramic sculptures that revolve around the ambivalent nature of distraction, understood as a state of mind that allows unexpected connections between the swinging moments of focus and drift. The dualism between, on the one hand, the noble and sacred distraction and, on the other hand, the earthly, impure and profane distraction constitutes a necessary component of the artist's daily practice, who aims to generate this same fluctuation in the viewer.

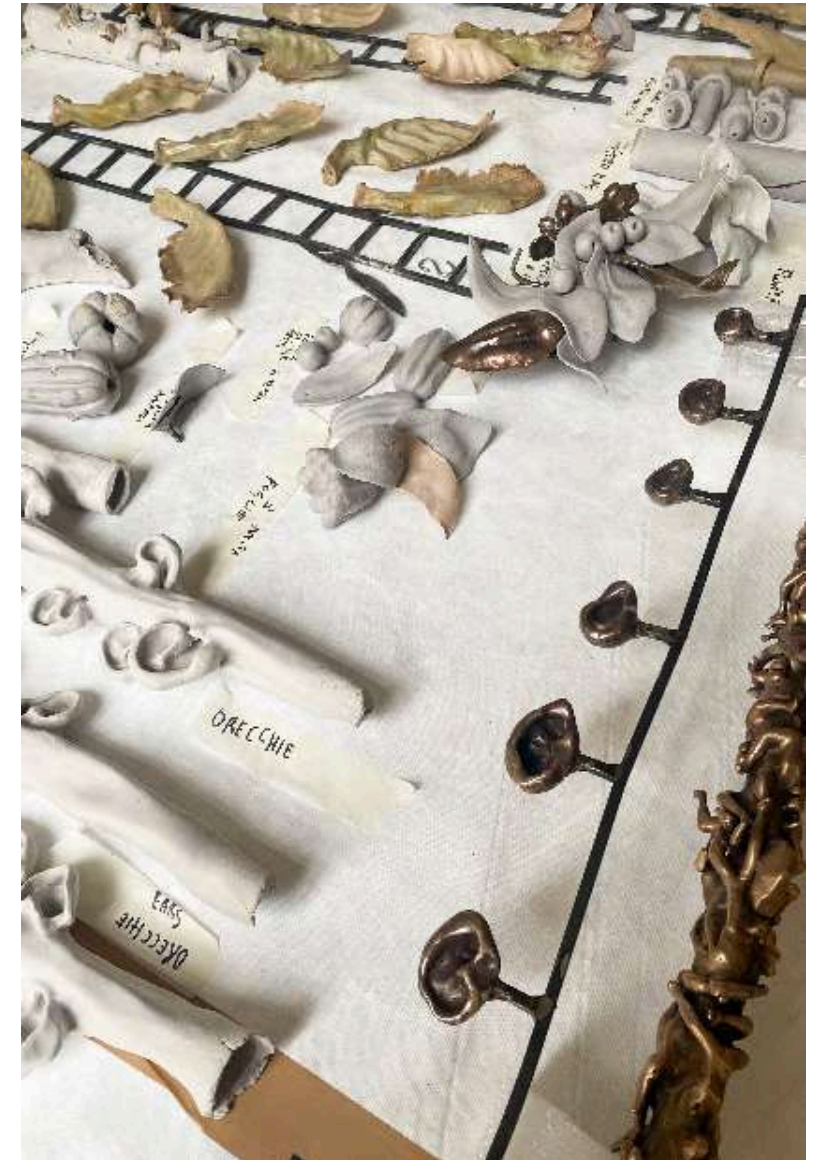
The exhibition opens with «Diviners continue to search for water», a small plaster case that brings to mind the shape of an airplane window. The viewer is invited to look inside the case and immerse in a forest of dried pomegranate branches from which body fragments, arms, legs and bronze ears grow. The wandering eye in this intricate landscape recalls the mental state of idly looking out the airplane's window under the dizzying effect of pressurized air. It is during these fleeting moments that the mind begins to wander distractedly and to feel somehow part of the whole, aware that reality is changeable depending on one's point of view.

Inspired by the holy iconography of the Italian Renaissance, Benni Bosetto creates enigmatic sculptures and drawings on silk that serve as containers for 'divinely useless' experiences. A concealed language, a form of mystery emerges throughout the gallery's space leading the visitors to feel constantly off track, turn their heads and change their gaze as lost in a fragment of the artist's reverie.

The works on silk are inhabited by a multiplicity of unicellular organisms, humans, animals, saints, and visceral parasites all interconnected by biomechanical pipes that pass through their orifices to form a single living system. The drawings are freely executed by the artist directly on silk, mounted on cotton and framed in a handmade steel frame which give them a sculptural quality. When they are not absorbed in some kind of reflection, Benni Bosetto's characters are grappling with a series of ritual gestures and self-care exercises. The body reveals itself here as the origin of perception, the source of material knowledge and the holder of an intergenerational memory.

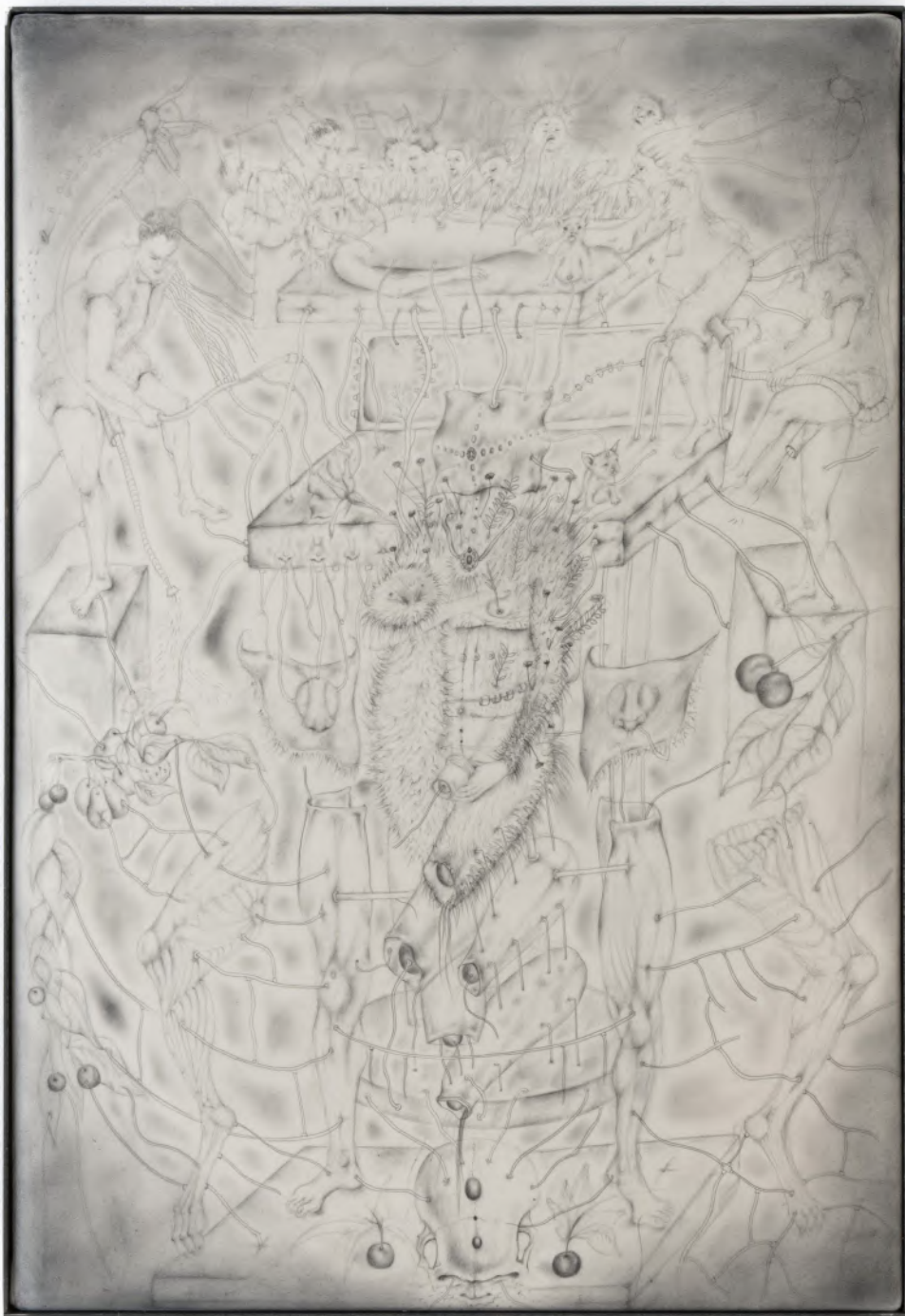
The third room consists of a forest of bronze and ceramic sculptures from which a baroque profusion of jewels, amulets, magic and devotional objects emerge. Hanging from the ceiling or resting on the floor, the works result from a combination of different aesthetic registers, ranging from the iconography of Carlo Crivelli and his impudent cucumbers and fruits, to the lightness and airiness of Fausto Melotti's sculptures.

Thought on a cosmic, social and personal scale, Bosetto's diary is often the source of her titles, sometimes extracted from a book or an article that has distracted her, aware that meaning is to be found between the interstices of reality, where distractions reside, when the head is in the clouds.





Tête en l'air, Installation View, Campoli Presti, Paris, 2022

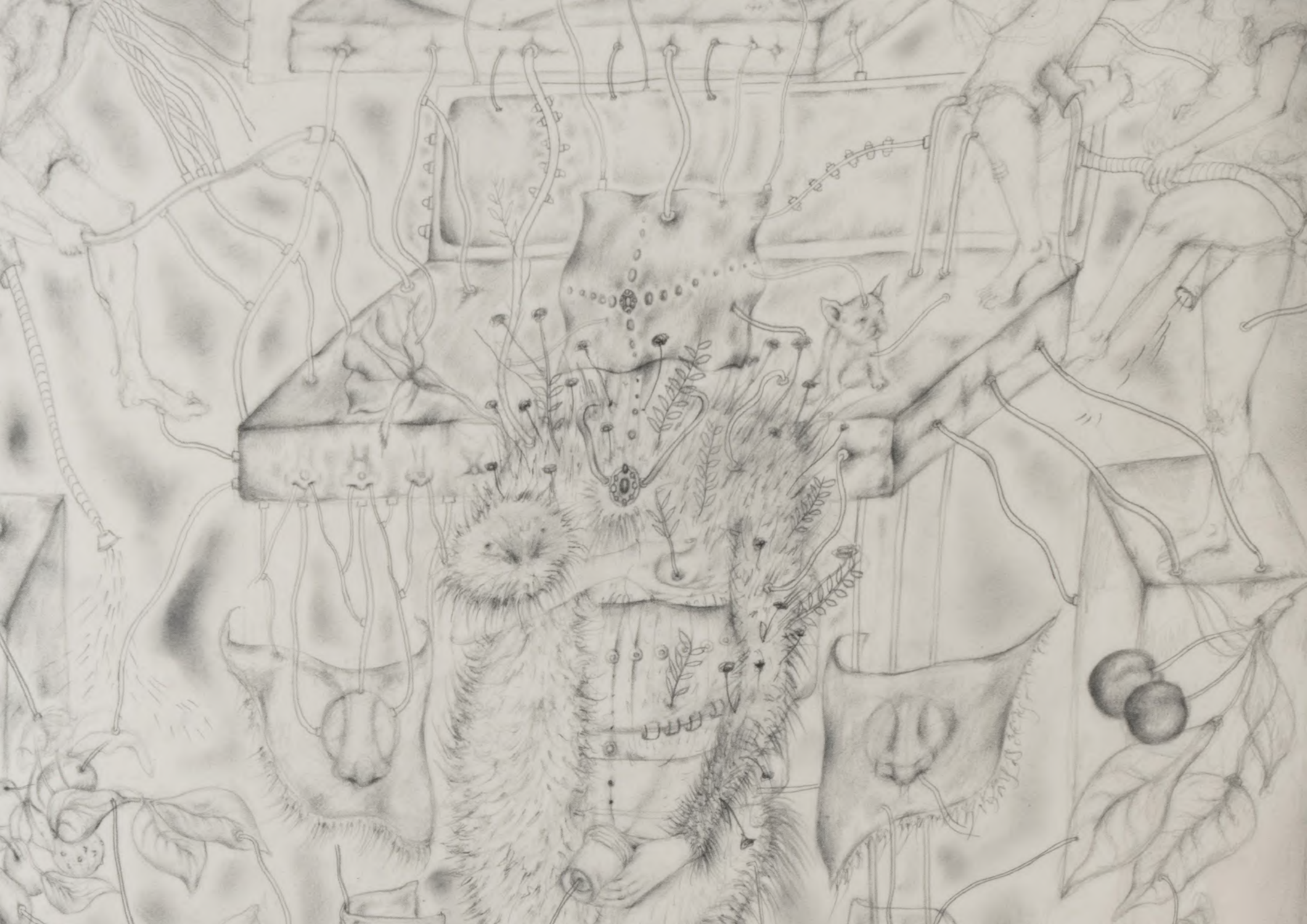


Benni Bosetto

"Like all great mysteries, we are all mysteriously called to love, no matter of our depravity or dispare", 2021

Pencil on silk, fabric, wadding, wood, iron

80 × 55 × 4 cm / 31.5 × 21.6 × 1.6 inches





Tête en l'air, Installation View, Campoli Presti, Paris, 2022



Benni Bosetto
"Saturday Total Eclipse" (Madonna della Candelotti), 2021
Ceramic, bronze, iron and pomegranate branches
150 × 54 × 20 cm / 59.05 × 21.25 × 8 inches



Benni Bosetto

"The cannibal solar storm could come very soon" (scepter with parasites and ears)", 2021

Bronze, iron, and steel cables

87 × 30 × 7 cm / 34.25 × 11.81 × 2.75 inches



Benni Bosetto
"Earth risk of global blackouts and more (Jewel 1)", 2021
Bronze, metal and steel cables
78 × 6 × 2 cm / 30.70 × 2.36 × 0.78 inches

Benni Bosetto
"Let's dance bachata on the moon (Jewel 2)", 2021
Bronze, metal and steel cables
72 × 11 × 2 cm / 28.34 × 4.33 × 0.78 inches

Stultifera

MAMbo, Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bologna

12 - 14 May 2022

Stultifera è una grande opera performativa concepita da Benni Bosetto in occasione di ART CITY Bologna 2022.

La scena si svolge sul ponte di una barca destinata a un viaggio senza fine. Grandi vele incorniciano lo spazio che, tra detriti marini, corde e funi, ospita l'intera narrazione. Intrappolati in una temporalità sospesa, i passeggeri interagiscono assumendo identità archetipiche nella necessità di delineare un nuovo ordine sociale, differente dalla terra lasciata alle loro spalle. Una voce fuori campo, La pausa, causa del loro girovagare ma unico riferimento a cui rivolgersi, guida i protagonisti nell'impresa, narrando di nuovi immaginari ispirati al mondo marino che li circonda e ad altri esseri viventi.

Tra danze, giochi e riti Stultifera sembra delineare una nuova cosmologia frutto di processi di risignificazione dove corpo, movimento e parola enunciana diventano il terreno d'azione in cui operare.

L'opera si struttura come un complesso pastiche artistico in cui frammenti di opere letterarie, teatrali, cinematografiche, componimenti musicali classici e folkloristici, riferimenti alla danza medievale di corte, a quella amatoriale, alle danze propiziatorie e infine agli happening e alla body art, assumono una nuova forma.

L'artista inscena continui contrasti formali, tra stomacheale e sublime, raffinato e volgare, affascinante e disgustoso, attraverso cui il corpo è osservato e impiegato seguendo diverse categorie e ideali estetici che sono lasciati collassare nel flusso ininterrotto della narrazione. Al pubblico è così destinato un caos sensoriale per trasformare qualsiasi tentativo interpretativo in una celebrazione, evocata dalla processione del corpo collettivo che conclude l'opera.



Stultifera si ispira a *La nave dei folli* di Sebastian Brant, l'opera satirica apparsa nel 1494 in cui una nave gremita di folli salpa in mare per raggiungere il paradiso dei folli, concludendosi in un tragico naufragio. L'opera di Brant viene ripresa nell'omonimo dipinto del pittore fiammingo Hieronymus Bosch, in cui un gruppo di personaggi è rappresentato all'interno di un'imbarcazione mentre soddisfa i propri piaceri, viaggiando senza meta.

L'immagine della Stultifera navis, è ripresa da Bosetto non tanto per il suo carattere di critica morale da cui anzi si solleva - riprendendo la lettura foucaultiana dell'opera, presente nella *Storia della follia* nell'età classica - quanto per riflettere sul potenziale del 'folle', sulla sua assenza di paura e quindi sulle dinamiche creative insite in tale istintività.

Allo stesso tempo intende osservare la navigazione come tempo e spazio sospeso - una pausa - in cui è possibile rimettere in questione le regole sociali e politiche dominanti, immaginando un nuovo inizio.



Stultifera, Installation View, MAMbo, Bologna, Italy, 2022



Stultifera, Installation View, MAMbo, Bologna, Italy, 2022



Benni Bosetto, *Stultifera*, 2022. Courtesy the artist and MAMbo. Photo Valentina Cafarotti and Federico Landi.

OF FOOLS

Benni Bosetto, 2016–2022: It ends with *Stultifera*

My first conversation with Benni Bosetto took place in a small Milanese bar, among the tables of a relatively anonymous outdoor area, near the beginning of summer 2016. I remember we talked about “narration”, the need to build an open space where rules, principles, thinking habits, and representative codes could be questioned without dispensing with the imaginative plane, but rather starting from and letting it out at full strength. Shortly after that, Florida - Benni’s first solo exhibition in the TILE project space - opened in September. The area was a project where the artist created a fictitious environment, drawn on white paper that almost completely covered the walls and floor. Two girls lay on opposite sides of the room, posed as if daydreaming, a non-contemplative but highly productive state of mind in which the imagination is at work developing new visions. The audience thus witnessed an imagined space, still in black and white, a proliferating visualization of that open space we were seeking.

Bosetto’s research on the potential of pre-logical thought began to take shape, leading her to investigate different cultures’ beliefs and ritualistic practices with an almost anthropological approach. At this time, she built up her use of drawing, through which she modified the sources and images she studied to construct a personal language incorporated within other visual codes. The drawing becomes a grammar, linked not only to line and gesture but comprising iconographic references transformed into myths to be repeated and modified. Some examples of this approach are her works between 2017 and 2019, such as *Sweep Away Sweep Anyway the End of the World Will Never Come* (Ibiza, 2017). Some twenty drawings framed the cloister of the Eivissa town hall, telling of shared rituals in which the body was reassessed through its fluids. Studying the ritual world bordering myth and reality let Bosetto connect with other visions of the body, in line with the organic world to which it belongs. The body



is a temple assembled through social practices (Judith Butler; Michel Foucault). Nevertheless, it can be rethought/called into question again through its dematerialization, scattered into the sculptural units that reproduce forms of simple organisms. Accordingly, Bosetto's sculptural work has continued her research into the realm of rituals as a narrative dimension capable of generating new identities, making scepters (Le streghe, 2018), sticks (Quattro bastoni, rococo parade, 2018), and other tools (Rickett blues, 2019). Despite concerning the body and therefore potentially activatable, they take it onto their surface, questioning its finitude (where does the body truly end?). Figures joined together in sexual acts or in collective experiences are paraded across these sculptures. Simultaneously, the work focuses on the possible visualizations of zero corporeality in a state of physical dispersion that creates proximity with other organisms. ANIMA, 2020, summarized this search. Identity is divided into groups of elongated sculptures, like oversized worms. Spoken narration makes room for rethinking categories and norms. Finally, drawings are charged with revealing the body's prospect of inhabiting several lives (the installation is accompanied by a track where a voice whispers stories from the holes left open by the wallpaper on the walls, finding room for small drawings of the transitions and connections between bodies).

The theme of the multiple lives a soul may have gone through is also the subject of *Il portico 2020*. Further deconstruction of the static and finite idea of identity is implemented, thanks to song and poetry. Under a portico, a group of performers intones poems rearranged as folk music that talks about ancient places through which the artist's soul has passed.

Stultifera is presented as a synthesis of the artist's last six years of research. The title, "dei folli", returns us to one of the first elements identified: an interest in the pre-logical dimensions of thought. The work becomes almost a celebration of instinct, intuition, spontaneous planning, and the primordial forms of association between human beings. The "madman" is seen as antagonistic to systems that, since ancient times, have removed, silenced, and eliminated those

considered different from the canons and criteria of normality. Here, the madman returns to the center by imagining a group of resilient vagabonds left to sail on the open sea, having been rejected by their homeland. However, this rejection has enabled them to question old customs and establish new rules for coexistence.

The drawing in *Stultifera* is further developed by being expanded to sculpture. The choice to use simple materials, assembly methods (through ropes, staples, wood, and knots), and, often, merely suggested shapes recall the design aspect of the sketch, the freedom of execution, the spontaneity of the line, and its fluidity in correspondence with the thought of the person creating it.

This anthropological study of visual sources and other beliefs is transformed into a complex artistic pastiche. The artist created a work that results from assembling and revising past literary works (Sebastian Brandt's *The Ship of Fools*, first of all), film clips (the movements opening the choir's performance revive the opening scene in Béla Taar's *Werkmeister Harmonies*; others recall Věra Chytilová's film *Daisies*), references to folk music and improvisational jazz, medieval court and amateur dance, propitiatory dances, lamentations and sacrifices, and finally to happenings and body art (the battle scene is a reconstruction of Carolee Scheenman's *Meat Joy*). The fragments are reassembled in a sculptural-like process, including references to Benni Bosetto's own art. One example is the scene in a hut where a group of live performers has created a series of clay artifacts referring to the series of organic sculptures mentioned above.

It was edited using the formal contrast between visions of order and canon and irreverent and disgusting actions where the latter can introduce processes that give new meaning (the madman's viewpoint reverses the vision), leading the audience to consider the arbitrariness of precise stylistic codes.

The human body is at the heart of the work. Once again, it is extended in communion with the organic and inorganic world around it. The ship in *Stultifera* appears to mimic the marine environment, its sails recalling a fish's scaly skin. The movements of returning creatures

drawn on fabrics; are imitated in several of the work's scenes.

The processes of dematerialization used many times by Bosetto find room in the voice-over, *The Pause*, a figure so ancient that she has lost the weight of her body.

Her words are poetry, not logical thought. Once again, they tell about other beings and ecosystems: flowers, snails, butterflies, and seawater seem to be the references through which to rethink human origin.

Stultifera leaves the image of a human being embracing madness and bringing to light its tragic and cosmic nature, finding in the ritual of shared tears or the sound of laughter some of the liminal experiences from which to reconstruct its identity. The human being in *Stultifera* is never alone, showing its multiple nature from the first song (*We Three - My Echo, My Shadow, and Me*), finally recognized in the collective body that includes the action.

Valentino

in collaboration with Gianluigi Ricuperati

Autumn / Fall 2021 2022

Valentino Des Ateliers is a Haute Couture collection, a community of artists, and a dialogue of inspirations. Presented in Venice in 2021, the collection is rooted in the idea of taking inspiration from visual artists selected in collaboration with Gianluigi Ricuperati, to create garments. Likewise, inspiring artists through the Maison's creativity, know-how, and craftsmanship was a cornerstone of Valentino Des Aterlier. Valentino Des Ateliers is a project deeply wanted by Creative Director Pierpaolo Piccioli, according to whom fashion is not art, because the latter has no purpose outside of itself, while the first always has a practical scope, a function, a use. Acknowledging differences is the first step in educating ourselves towards mutual listening, made of curiosity, enthusiasm, and respect. This listening needs time, just like Haute Couture and at the end of the day like art. That's why, this project's progress has been slow, a pace perhaps unusual for our actual world.



Io dico Io – I say I

Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome

1 March – 6 June 2021

Loosely based on Carla Lonzi's texts, *Io dico Io – I say I* originates from a necessity to take the floor and speak for oneself in order to assert one's subjectivity, by creating a single multitude, a multiplicity of I that resonates with consonances and dissonances.

Io dico Io – I say I, conceived as an open inquiry on the present, pulverizes schematisms and preordained statutes and traces a non-linear route: a narration that settles stories, gazes, imagery. A selfie, a self-portrait, an adventure.

The show puts together more than 40 Italian female artists of different generations, who, in different historical and social contexts, have told their own adventure of authenticity and have expressed their own way of inhabiting the world through a constellation of visions.



00 0 00

ADA, Rome

5 March / 7 May 2021

Remember, man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return, G. 3,19 On 21/06/1907 Hilma Af Klimt writes the symbol 00 0 00 in the twenty-sixth page of her notes, to define a concept of origin, drawn not to comfort but capable of repeating itself, chaotically and dangerously. Here the zero does not represent a linear starting point, but a repeated and compound element in a perhaps endless movement. 00 0 00 is a world where the numbers after the zero do not exist and where the concept of accumulation disappears, leaving only to the elementary essence of things. Bosetto re-elaborates the concept of origin which does not create in image and likeness, but combines and mixes, reducing every living being to mud, earth and ash. The origin thus insinuates itself in every vital and temporal fragment with a compostist approach, in a tangle of forms and existences, destined to alternate both composition and decomposition and generated to dissolve and finally mix with each other.

Benni Bosetto reconstructs at ADA a place abandoned from everyday life where debris, dust and bacteria seem to have inhabited the room for an indefinite time, creating a new ecosystem, fed by those who pass through it. The exhibited sculptures eschew the concept of temporality, simulating a superorganism merged with the environment, free from the container and the form. Their features recall primordial and elementary forms that narrate a constantly repeated process in 00 0 00, where each creature is in kinship with the others. 00 0 00 reinterprets the myth of reincarnation in a metanarrative key, staging an indefinite hyperorganism which becomes surface, object, body and environment at the same time.

00 0 00, Installation View, ADA, Rome, 2021



00 0 00, Installation View, ADA, Rome, 2021



MOUSSE

Benni Bosetto, 00 0 00 at ADA, Rome

6 March - 8 May 2021



BenniBosetto, 0 00 0 0 0000 0 000 0 X, 2021. Courtesy: ADA Rome. Photo: Roberto Apa

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FUORI

Groupe Exhibition

La Quadriennale di Roma 2020, Rome

30 October 2020 - 17 January 2021

Benni Bosetto produces wall paintings and drawings, performances, sculptures and installations in which the body is deconstructed and reimagined. These choreographies cannot be temporally located but are inspired by and mix medieval tales, news stories, historical accounts, religious legends and local superstitions.

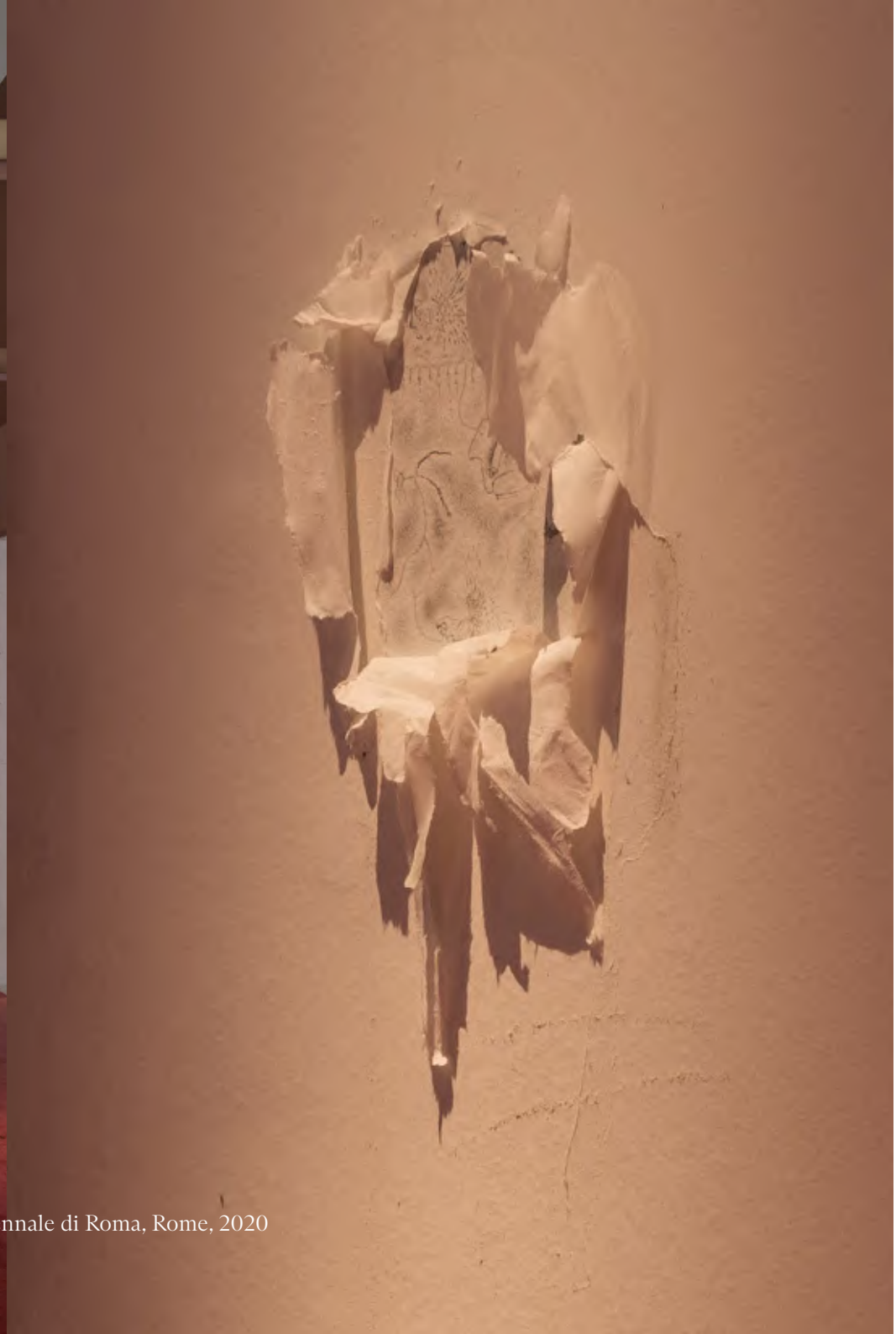
Anima (Saul, 2020) is an environmental and sound installation that evokes the human presence in absence. Filled with voices and sounds, the room seems abandoned, yet it evokes myths and quantic narrations. The torn wallpaper exposes drawings on the wall, while on the ground, amidst dust and waste, ceramic sculptures are reminiscent of organisms or organic elements. Bosetto rereads the dematerialization of the body, its transcending the space-time continuum and its becoming the image of a perennial becoming.



FUORI, Installation View, La Quadriennale di Roma, Rome, 2020



FUORI, Installation View, La Quadriennale di Roma, Rome, 2020



Florida

Tile Project Space

5 March / 7 May 2021

The project consists in creating a narrative device composed of several elements: a set design, characters, symbolic elements and a pending estate script. Building a fictional space, the artist clears the imagination of reconstructing the story from its origins through the use of drawing, the first tool of the human expression, and paper.

The environment has been designed as a domestic sanctuary where Greek columns, arches and a tropical nature punctuate the background. Two characters lay in the center of the room, enjoying helplessly the benefits of eternal fountain of youth. Florida is a real place as well as a visualized one, it's provoked by the mind wandering, a particular activity of thought, essential to create and produce new ideas. Supposed to be unprofitable, this agency, known also as day dreaming, absorbs human being the 50% of his daytime, becoming therefore one of his fundamental features. The artist, working more on building a narrative image than an encompassing environment, forces the public to stay away from the scene in progress, defining in this way a physical space that allows each visitor an intimacy with the story and the characters. The contemplative experience is accompanied by inertia and slower pace of the whole mise-en-scene, strengthening both the melancholy tone and the narrative potentiality.



Waves Between Us

Group Exhibition

Palazzo Re Rebaudengo, Guarene, Italy

3 October 2020 – 13 December 2020



BENNI BOSETTO

[1987, Milano]

13

From Bowels to Sky,
2020

Disegno a parete,
dimensioni ambientali
Courtesy l'artista
e ADA, Roma

Il disegno site-specific a grafite e gesso su muro di Benni Bosetto, commissionato per *Waves Between Us*, forma un ambiente immersivo simile a una grotta, che si estende lungo la galleria sotterranea di Palazzo Re Rebaudengo. Il paesaggio non tradizionale dell'artista si compone di "macchine dermiche" interconnesse, appendici umane e non umane unite da tubi medicali, cavi industriali e secrezioni di fluidi corporei salini. Frammentando le narrazioni per produrre codici di comunicazione non convenzionali, il *mark-making* di Bosetto è un processo imprevedibile e intuitivo, non una rappresentazione diretta o astratta, ma una costellazione di forme carnali aperte. Nello spazio sotterraneo, la ricerca dell'artista su antichi rituali femminili attiva un linguaggio visivo pre-logico e ambiguo, che concepisce la gestualità come un "codice vivente" e un coro di voci. *From Bowels to Sky* rappresenta le parole come forme liquide che emergono dai nostri sistemi digestivi per diventare "la voce come acqua nell'aria".

From Bowels to Sky,
2020

Wall drawing,
environmental
dimensions
Courtesy the artist
and ADA, Rome

Benni Bosetto's site-specific graphite pencil and chalk wall drawing commissioned for *Waves Between Us* forms an immersive grotto-esque environment that stretches across the basement gallery of the Palazzo Re Rebaudengo. The artist's untraditional landscape features interconnected 'dermic machines', human and non-human appendages conjoined with medical tubes, industrial cables, and the excretion of salty bodily fluids. Fragmenting narratives to produce unconventional codes of communication, Bosetto's mark-making is an unpredictable and intuitive process, neither direct representation or abstraction, but a constellation of open carnal forms. The artist's research into ancient female rituals in subterranean space activates a pre-logical and ambiguous visual language, conceiving gestures as a 'living code' and a chorus of voices. *From Bowels to Sky* depicts words as liquid forms that emerge from our digestive systems to become 'the voice as water in the air'.



Waves Between Us, Installation view, Palazzo Re Rebaudengo, Guarene, 2020





KubaParis

WAVES BETWEEN US

Palazzo Re Rebaudengo, Piazza Roma 1, Guarene

02.10 -14.11.2020

Curated by Alison Karasyk, Camille Regli, Katie Simpson

Credit photos: © Domenico Conte

13 March - 15 April 2018



The 14th edition of the Young Curators Residency Programme unfolded against the backdrop of COVID-19's gripping hold over northern Italy. The sounding alarm of this time – both literally and metaphorically – became a point of departure for the exhibition, uncovering a dual interpretation of the Italian term sirena. Known as both the mythological female figure of the sea and the sound of emergency, the sirena awakens our senses and orients us in the moment whilst amplifying an urgency to pause and listen.

In Homer's The Odyssey, the sirena is portrayed as a perilous and powerful air and sea creature – a female, or gang of females, whose song seduces the poem's protagonist Odysseus and his crew as they attempt to helm their ship home. Listening to their voices poses the threat of descending into the underworld with no return. Both divine and grotesque, the sirena lures the ego into a dissolved state, evoking delusion, seduction and an undoing of consciousness. In her seminal book For More than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression, Italian philosopher Adriana Cavarero describes how the pathos of the story, 'is concentrated on the deadly, seductive circuit between voice and hearing, sound and ear. As monstrous singers, or deadly women with powerful voices, the Sirens produce an acoustic pleasure that kills men'. Dwelling in the aqueous depths and on land, the sirena represents both proximity and remoteness experienced within our own world today. Therein, Waves Between Us reflects upon Cavarero's claim, 'distance is measured by the sound of the voice and not by the purview of the eye'.

In this exhibition, the sirena performs a unique slippage, weaving through each artists' practice to explore sound as a mode of transmission, saltwater as a texture of connectivity, and the underworlds of the grotto and swamp as ecosystems of interaction and change. The artworks presented engage with embodiment in physical and collective forms; the flesh of our throats, the voices that reverberate from our mouths, the stories that resonate between our ears, and the memories that dwell in our guts. Inhabiting the ground floor and basement of the Palazzo Re Rebaudengo–nestled in the hills of Guarene–the exhibition provides a periphery for vocal, material and collective experimentation. Site-specific commissions by ALMARE, Benni Bosetto and Binta Diaw transgress normative boundaries of time and space, engaging with alternative narratives and shared rituals. Raffaella Naldi Rossano's works on paper also materialize ritual, forming a nonlinear system of symbology and correspondence. The sculptural works of Bea Bonafini and Nuvola Ravera integrate natural and local materials into intimate vessels that echo the elements of our own watery bodies. Marco Giordano and Real Madrid's sculptural installations evoke the erotics of subterranean space, queering organic and everyday objects as containers for liquid and vocal emission. Elisa Strinna's video work navigates the nuanced channels of the Mediterranean Sea, while the Sicilian collective Femminote's purchasing project Isola delle Femmine enacts the emancipatory potential of a borderless territory.



Benni Bosetto, From Bowels to Sky (detail), wall drawing, 2020

The artworks presented explore 'saltwater as passage, saltwater as the medium of transport, saltwater as sweaty sign of our bodies' exertions and tearful signs of our capacity for affect' in the words of art historian Griselda Pollock. Traversing sculpture, sound, video and drawing, the wave is a connective thread that evokes movement between our bodies and the bodies of water around us, giving texture to the resonance of voices, the passage of sound, and unseen natural depths. As the world adjusts to the reality of its isolated enclaves, how will our subjectivities be nurtured within the walls of our houses, our grottos, and our oceans? How are systems of communication intervening to form new spheres of thought and connectivity? In both the exhibition and accompanying online platform, Waves Between Us engages with these questions, inviting artists to wrestle with myths, virality, and sonic experimentation to test new ways of being together.

Il portico

performance at Almanac, Turin, 2020

The project, which consists of an environmental installation, drawings applied to clothing and a performance, is the result of a series of meetings held by the artist with mediums and seers who have brought to light her past and future lives. With the conviction of having a story that does not end in the current biological one, the artist and, more generally, human beings stand as part of a universe of transmission of characters and inclinations, which find home and custody in a body that over the centuries has been able to change shape, genus and species.

In the stories, which see the artist living, among others, the life of a Poor Clare nun, a gypsy who died at the stake, a dolphin and a scribe from ancient Egypt, an element remains constant which is difficult to define – soul, spirit, life force, breath – and which appears, in the theory of reincarnation, as a unifying element among living beings: the possible image of a transiting and nomadic being.

Through a series of folk songs whose texts were entrusted to third parties and interpreted musically by the performers on stage, Bosetto recalls the history of her ancestors. The artist entrusts the story of her lives to the oral transmission system of popular culture, in which stories, anecdotes and legends remain in the memory of a community for centuries, crossing multiple geographical regions.







Jewels

curated by Evelyn Simons

Asiat, Vilvoorde, Belgium, 2019

Handmade sculptures in terracotta depict animated figurines, body parts (both seductive and repulsive), and lush botanical formations. They are chained together and adorn the fortifying columns and roof structure of this former military barrack as a mysterious ornament. A vast water surface, filled with dust, earth and other organic particles, mirrors and amplifies these creatures and acts as a material witness to their lives and spirits—registering recollections from the past as well as hopes for the future.

In the touching of water and flesh, the spectator becomes a participant in this unearthing of ritualistic aspects already buried within our current environment. Reality is re-set, reinforced and reclaimed.



Ambiente X

with Xenia Perek

KUNSTRAUM, LONDON

29 NOVEMBER 2019

On 29 November 2019 Kunstraum, London hosted *Ambiente X*, a durational performance by Benni Bosetto with Xenia Perek, curated by Giulia Civardi. *Ambiente X* is a newly commissioned performance that explores everyday rituals and the transformative power of magical thinking through sound and choreographed gestures.

Over the course of an afternoon the performance looped six times: a patch of the carpet was scrubbed clean six times, Benni and Xenia killed time together six times, they ate six roast chickens and the gallery fell into an uneasy darkness six times.

Ambiente X takes the form of a day at the office. Two workers perform mundane tasks of a routinised work activity: they file paperwork, make coffee, talk on the phone. Gradually, this conventional language transforms. They begin to speak in reverse, chant, talk to mirrors. The lights go off – system anomaly. The set recalls a near past. Simultaneously, it stages the ever-present collective timescape of work and productivity.

Ambiente X conflates different temporal layers in a progressive negotiation of linear time. It fuses the measurability of work performances with magical thinking, namely that which is imaginative, illogical, ineffable, and therefore, technically inoperative. Gestures and movements are used as devices to construct a different experience of reality for therapeutic purposes, to preserve one's autonomy in moments of uncertainty, and create new body-languages. Bosetto turns to magic, the primitive, and dance rituals to investigate the potential of recollecting ancient memories and exploring different reality- systems alongside the given one.

The performance score is played on a loop to reach a state of trance that alters the perception of time. Through repetition and endurance, the body incorporates the ability to record like a mechanical device. By alternating everyday 'rituals' – understood as a series of social customs, practices, or conventional acts – from the dominant socio-economic order with imaginary and symbolic gestures, the performers create small interruptions. Gestures open up different frames through which view reality, reinforcing it, and making it known again.

Ambiente X and the publication are kindly supported by Q-International, La Quadriennale di Roma and patrons Diego Bergamaschi, Massimo De Palma, Oliviero Falconi, Marco Martini, and Paolo Mauri Brusa.

Sound composition: Vito Gatto

Costume design: Timna Weber

Camera: Johnston Sheard

Photos: Nat Urazmetova





I.

One of the first conversations I had with Benni Bosetto was about a mysterious object: a leaf. What made it so peculiar was not the colour or shape, but the fact that it had all her past lives written on it. The leaf was waiting for her in a library in India, a library that anyone with a plane ticket and a visa can visit. Apparently, this encyclopaedic place has a leaf for each person who visits. She told me that a man read her past and decoded the strange object, of which she has both a photographic and written testimony. I did not see these, so I had to imagine. Even though this story seemed odd and inexplicable, it somehow still felt possible. Benni Bosetto's practice operates at the crossroad between fact and fiction, magic and superstition, what is other and what remains invisible. Spanning from drawing and sculpture to performance, operating individually or incorporated into one another, the work maintains a physical approach that aims to expose the connections between seemingly unrelated worlds. Corporeal to the point of visceral, her artistic output emerges from physical and theoretical research, expanding into everyday rituals, belief-systems, news and fictions alike.

I once stumbled upon her YouTube research playlist, which gave me a sense of the depth of her practice. Among the videos were documentaries of spiritual healers, historical references to dancing mania and public hysteria, dance traditions like minimalist theatre and tarantism, and erratic dances of people connecting with gods. These elements do not enter her practice directly but rather form a conceptual echo that, in contact with her intuitions, reverberates into shapes and gestures.

Using non-verbal language, Bosetto's works map bodies across time and species. Her drawings often picture inflated bodies which interconnect erotically and transform with other life forms and objects. Meanwhile, her sculptures suggest mythical creatures, disassembled body parts and magic wands. Concrete works and performances alike become instruments to perform primitive ways of life and to conjure other worlds.

While her physical works encompass a recognisable visual style, her performative aesthetic often fluctuates depending on the space and conditions in which it is presented. Nevertheless, throughout her practice, the environments she creates maintain a sensual and therapeutic approach—almost holistic—that envelops viewers in an intimate trance-state, where time feels suspended. To borrow Donna Haraway's terminology, her pieces unfold as “situated knowledges.” In Bosetto's work, as in Haraway's text, objectivity and monolithic explanations are abandoned in favour of a fragmented conception of reality, an assemblage of different enquiries, of “views from somewhere.” “Somewhere” is positioned in a geographical and historical milieu, embodying a type of corporeal sight. This corporeal vision is embraced by the artist when making sculptures and when choreographing performances. In her new piece at Kunstraum, however, it is the first time Bosetto intervenes as a performer herself. This work is created for the audience—a public that is not involved as participants who in turn have to perform, but as observers and witnesses of the ineffable.

II.

For her first show in London, Benni Bosetto presents a new performance at Kunstraum that explores the transformative power of magical thinking through carefully designed sets, sounds and choreographed gestures. Developed and performed with enia Perek, the work combines diverse streams of research—trance, behavioural codes, magic, the primitive—to construct a different experience of daily rituals of labour and time. *Ambiente* takes the form of a day at the office. Two workers perform mundane tasks and repetitive work activities: they file paperwork, make coffee, talk on the phone. Gradually, this conventional setting transforms. They begin to walk in reverse they spit coffee on mirrors. As the pages of a book are frantically turned, time speeds up. Gestures lose their ordinary meaning.

Ambiente conflates various temporal layers in a progressive negotiation of linear time. It fuses the measurability of work performances with symbolic gestures that belong to magic—namely that which is ineffable, belief-driven and therefore technically inoperative. Bosetto turns to “magic” not as a mode of escape into pure irrationality or illusion, but rather to expand the space of what is possible. In *Ambiente*, gestures and movements are used as devices to propose alternative experiences of reality for therapeutic purposes, to preserve one's autonomy in moments of uncertainty and to create new body-languages. Within an economy that increasingly relies on feelings and attention, and turns bodies into resources from which to draw, there is a proliferation of psychopathologies that span entire communities, entailing a loss of individual agency.

As Federico Campagna explains in *Technic and Magic*, the current reality-system or “Technic”—partly based on absolute language, measure and seriality—is in crisis and poses “the threat of losing both one's own presence in the world and the presence of the world itself.” Campagna suggests that in order to recover our autonomy, we must challenge the idea of what defines “reality” itself, rather than conceiving our given reality-system as the only possible option. Moreover, he explains that neither Technic nor Magic are actually “things” that we physically encounter, but massively distributed, invisible entities that are perceivable only through the mark they leave on the world.

Although Campagna speaks from a metaphysical perspective, one can attempt to test his concepts in practice. By displaying and modifying everyday “rituals” from the dominant economic and social order with bodily gestures that belong to alternate social realities and magical thinking, the performers create small interruptions. They leave subtle marks on the world. These marks, in turn, open up different frames of reference through which we can view reality, reinforcing it and making it known again.

Among these gestures, Bosetto crafts a series of archetypes: highly symbolic figures that stimulate an emotional, non-verbal recognition of the world. She recreates the symbol of seriality and productivity: the office. As one BBC news reporter commented in 2013, “The office is where we spend most of our time. It's practically where we live.” While this may appear old-fashioned in light of the gig economy, the office is more than a space alone. It embodies the prototype of work, repetition and absorption of time. The office is a state of mind, not a place. Correspondingly, Bosetto starts from a personal level that refracts into a collective space. She takes behavioural codes visible in the office and begins a process of deconstruction. The act of cleaning the office—a task the artist repeatedly performed in previous jobs—is no longer only maintenance work. In a ritualistic fashion, it becomes a therapeutic form of cleansing, a clearing of space for changes to come.

Mirrors and coffee—another common presence in the workplace—become instruments for divination. The performers eat roasted chickens, hinting at objects of sacrifice: living animals killed on stage during rock concerts, in minimalist Japanese theatre performances of the early 1960s, and in religious rituals. Mixing spiritual references with those of radical performance art and entertainment culture, Bosetto strips the layers that constitute reality—in theory, on fictional stages and in gallery spaces. The bones of the chicken morph into totems. The skeleton of a reality is constructed, x-rayed and placed before the eyes of the public. The performance score is played on a loop to reach a state of trance that alters our perception of time. Through repetition and endurance, the body records gestures like a mechanical device. We are invited to witness the soothsaying nature of labour—this remedial repetition, this re-claiming of one's world.

III.

The reason for this extended introduction is also the reason for the existence of this publication. Besides documenting an ephemeral event that lasts only a few hours, this publication remains the first printed account of Benni Bosetto's work in the English language.

Though a young artist, her work is known throughout Europe, particularly in her native Italy. The publication includes a number of texts and images that expand on ideas explored in the performance and provide insight into Bosetto's drawing practice. An extract of *Technic and Magic* by Federico Campagna sheds light on the definition of “magic” as intended in this work. Campagna presents a revised understanding of magic, following *Il Mondo Magico* by De Martino—a milestone in Italian anthropological research and a major influence in Bosetto's practice.

Another text by London-based curator and Assistant Curator of International Art at Tate Modern, Dina Akhmeedeva, addresses the historical and symbolic meaning of a recurring object in the performance: the mirror. Expanding on notions of doubling, conjuring the other realm, and the performance itself as a mirror, her contribution resonates with the core themes of the project.

Doubling is an essential element in the work. The research and development of the performance would not have been possible without Bosetto's double, enia Perek, who accompanied the artist in choreographing the piece. The book also includes a statement written by Perek, guiding us through her practice, as well as behind-the-scenes images shot throughout rehearsals and sketches of scenes from the performance.

There is still no testimony of the leaf. For that, you will have to use your imagination.

Giulia Civardi

Il Miracolo

curated by Caterina Molteni
Bagni Misteriosi, Milan, 2018

The miracle, 2018, is an action conceived by Benni Bosetto as a collective attempt to transform the water in the Bagni Misteriosi pool.

The artist considers this liquid as the first constitutive element of the body, understood as a human, vegetable, inorganic, but also social body, capable of changing and containing the memory of the changes present in the surrounding environment.

Il miracolo, 2019, performance live at Bagni Misteriosi, Milan, a project by Marina Nissim,
performance curated by Caterina Molteni



Le Streghe

Fonderia Artistica Battaglia, 2018

In from the sky Millions meteorites in the blood
Breakfast lunch and supper with fireflies from
Savitri
May the Planet bloom again
And may my next boyfriend have a beach
house
May my breasts begin resembling one
another
And may the rivers keep joining the surface of
the Earth and the abysses May another
Medusa be beheaded
May I know what every man thinks of my
appearance, when crossing my way May a
new thought widespread on the Earth, hybrid
and manifold
May the human acknowledge a new version
of time
And may I free myself from the addiction of
chocolate and sugars
Tan me from the inside, you that hold the
thunders in your hands Abound me from the
outside, you that govern the three worlds.



Gli Imbambolati

ADA, Rome, 2018

A group of bas-relief sculptures protrudes from the floor: here we are, on the border between sky and clouds. Suspended in the zero-gravity cloud zone and, at the same time, flattened by the weight of the sky, raised heads emerge from a packed crowd. All their astonished gazes are focused on a certain point, somewhere higher, outside the scene.

We do not know whether these figures are witnessing a catastrophe or a miracle. Perhaps an eclipse has hypnotized them. Some appear afraid and confused others display an enraptured smile or a dopey expression. We do not know why they are there, in the clouds.

In this tragicomic scene, something solemn seems to occur, even though the characters' caricatural poses suggest the presence of a foul smell so intense that it compels them to hold their noses. Flies, lured by the stench, settle on their cheeks.

This grotesque tableau is suspended within an imaginary architecture in which the absence of three-dimensional references embraces the entire space. As in dreams, poised between reality and appearance, this artificial set-up—composed of lines and blind arches—draws the viewer into a zone of reversed perspective where the space-time continuum is denied.







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