

OPENING

June 20th, 2024 6 PM - 9 PM

ERA GALLERY

Via Gioacchino Rossini 3, Milan, Italy

Opening hours:

Tue - Fri: 10.30 AM- 7 PM

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SHAPING GRACE AND DISQUIET

CURATED BY DOMENICO DE CHIRICO

CHIDINMA NNOLI, MICHAEL IGWE,
CATERINA SAMMARTINO, LUCA DI TERLIZZI,
GIANMARCO PORRU

“Everything is imperfect, there is no sunset so beautiful that it could not be more beautiful.”

Fernando Pessoa, The Book of Disquiet.

The group exhibition “Shaping Grace and Disquiet,” aims to scrutinise, through countless questions, the dark universe of the subconscious that mysteriously pulls upon our strings to determine the unique modes that each of us adopts when dealing with sensual reality - that dark and impalpable space defined by the Roman philosopher Calcidio as a «torrent always in motion». Naturally inexact and profoundly correlated to the delicate world of the senses, this experience encourages us to identify our knowledge with our perception, wherein truth, reality and sensibility are unquestionably equivalent.

Starting from the Platonic supposition that it is only in everyday life, understood as a unique proscenium upon which everything takes place, that one can sniff out the most intimate *raison d'être* of reality and its most unconfessed cause, “Shaping grace and disquiet” refers closely to the concept of *Lebenswelt* or ‘World of Life’, as elaborated by Edmund Husserl, whose dual nature preserves within it both the auroral universe of self-evidence and the concrete and visible one in which everyday life itself, perfectly median, becomes simultaneously the object of exploration and metaphysical foundation for the criticism of other forms of knowledge.

Therefore, the path taken towards the spasmodic search for and subsequent achievement of the ideas of goodness, truth, the just and the beautiful, obliges us to first deal with everything that corresponds to the interpretative trauma of our most personal perceptions, that related to one’s own experience and the relationships that each individual intertwines with the world which surrounds them.

And so, in an attempt to reconstruct a constellation of past events - between the awareness of the perils of the present and the unknown needs of the near future - the question arises spontaneously: what is the boundary between dream and shadow, between true and partial, between manifest and intangible? Among abstract or hinted landscapes and moods that are impenetrable but nevertheless corroborated by an enigmatic-corporal preponderance, the five artists invited here - Chidinma Nnoli, Michael Igwe, Caterina Sammartino, Luca Di Terlizzi and Gianmarco Porru - suggest that we

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abandon ourselves to the suggestions of the senses, but only where they have the power to merge with the unknown, waiting for this mixture to generate moments of revelation and shockingly vital outbursts.

Within a scenario that is antithetically presented as tragic and ironic, indulgent and restless, rough and graceful, these artists reflect tirelessly on the meaning of life, death, connivance, the vulnerability of the soul, the most intimate memories, the imperishable flow of time and its changes, social hierarchies, the uncertainty of what will come to be and the lively heterogeneity of the colours that permeate our most disparate emotions, so as to fresco all that which, with the sound of delicacy and yearning, is constantly alive inside and outside each of us.

Chidinma Nnoli, between the experience of spiritual life and all that can be considered material, explores, through a sage use of painting, the flow of the narrative of a single subject, superimposing the past on the present and vice versa, constantly referring to the self in conflict with a background often saturated with religion and gendered obligations. Nnoli thinks of her practice as a mapping of space, of the body and of a landscape that preserves remnants of memories, wherein the ideas of freedom and entrapment continuously overlap. At the center of her conceptual attention is the act of telling stories, involving feminism and placing emphasis on a subjective approach, understood from a political point of view. Her process involves the use of textures, mixtures, sketches and deletions. What follows are works that allude to and question the hostile structures that often limit the actions of women, especially within religious and familial spaces. Thinking about the functionality of painting, in addition to its ability to be a formidable means of affirmation, Chidinma Nnoli wants to recreate what can be principally felt; something intense, poetic and balanced in spite of its continuous state of becoming.

Michael Igwe, through experimentation and creative processes, founded on the pleasure of research oriented towards a transcendental experience of the image, continues to give priority to methods and ideas that reach a fully realised vision of painting, understood as an experiential means aimed at generating a single formal aesthetic. This radical nature of the materiality of painting which is fluidly layered and its powerful effects in linking, storing and infusing everything into the resolution of the image, simultaneously allow him to affirm his innate poetics and his unscripted stories. As an artist whose childhood is largely populated by memories handed down orally, his interest lies in the dedicated discipline of such narration and in the potential within painting to shape the nuances of all those narratives that involve him personally. Therefore, his work comes before our eyes as a clear reminder of the eternal image, herein kept continually alive.

Both the delicate question of the infinite - that unavoidable immensity which cloaks our terrestrial globe - and the mystery of what lies beyond the beyond, constitute the visceral and aulic founda-

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tion of the research of the young Roman artist Caterina Sammartino. Her work, taking on installed forms, nourishes the eternal and indissoluble bond between the tangible hemisphere and that which is inscrutable, which from time to time, renders itself ever more distinct and elastic. The tension between tangible and intangible which Caterina Sammartino seeks to create is traceable in the use of extremely familiar materials such as cotton, linen, hemp and unwrought metals, which in turn posture in actions which can be defined as performative. These, notwithstanding their apparent ordinariness, speak of antique traditions, they whisper of a world that is profoundly arcane. Clear and flowing, all of her works manifest themselves exactly as they are, bare and exposed. They aspire, in their bold extroversion, to touch upon the strings of the unspoken, traceable in the splashes of gold that adorn the canvases, precious legacies and liquid trophies of a hand moving asymptotically towards the apex, frescoing her personal Weltanschauung onto their surface.

Luca Di Terlizzi, through his apparently exultant practice, gently explores the intricate roots of humanity, its abysmal ancestral elements and the unique yet dissimilar behaviors of different civilizations. In his works, devoted to a sincere and profound inner dialogue, dashed figurative elements and rather decisive abstract gestures live together, under the banner of an expressive approach that becomes in and of itself a language, adorned, in turn, by colours that arise from a meticulous anthropological study of various cultures. What follows is a riot of images related to symbolism, philosophy, religions and the ancestral importance of traditionally celebratory aspects.

In his particularly open artistic practice, composed and tempered by a notably current stylistic register, Gianmarco Porru draws inspiration mainly from the vivid cultures and the immortal mythologies of the Mediterranean. What follows is a constant exchange between past and present aimed at creating a fertile dialogue between the obsolete yet fascinating folk traditions and oral histories he addresses with ultra-contemporary visual culture of his aesthetic. Different characters, elements and masks dot a tranchant imagination, rich and layered in which the references to the most timeless élan vital are skilfully intertwined with the immensity of classical literature, noble Hellenistic culture and astrological secrecy.

TEXT BY DOMENICO DE CHIRICO