

PRESS RELEASE

MURATCENTOVENTIDUE ARTECONTEMPORANEA

WHAT WE ONCE WERE

Rita Casdia, Cristiano De Gaetano, Elisabetta Di Sopra, Lello Gelao, Kaia Hugin, Kaja Leijon, Cristina Pavesi

Galleria Muratcentoventidue Artecontemporanea is pleased to present *What we once were*, a group exhibition featuring works by Rita Casdia, Cristiano De Gaetano, Elisabetta Di Sopra, Lello Gelao, Kaia Hugin, Kaja Leijon, Cristina Pavesi.

The exhibition proposes an original comparison of works which, through different languages, address a common theme, childhood, representing the spirit, the vulnerability, the playfulness, the unpredictability, the restlessness and the dignity of children.

Rita Casdia's work studies the basic mechanisms that govern feelings, focusing mainly on the dynamics generated by emotional connections and sexuality. The artist explores emotional worlds that evolve through a broken and uninhibited narrative structure in which she mixes references from classic iconography, random elements, everyday banality, but also from her experience and her dreams. Video animation, drawing, and sculpture co-exist in her installations and articulate an expressive universe rooted in the complex emotional and symbolic content she brings to it.

The artist presents a series of extremely synthetic drawings, done with gel ink on paper, essential in the lines and contents where elements of the child's imagination appear, easy to read, and presented with multiple stratifications of meaning.

There is a work by **Cristiano De Gaetano**, one of the most interesting talents of the new generations of Apulian artists, who unfortunately passed away in 2013, and to whom the Pascali Museum recently dedicated a tribute through an anthology exhibition.

His wide production ranged from sculpture to photography, and from painting to video. In 2006 he began producing (from the use of family photo albums and people close to his heart) portraits of children and young men and women on wooden shapes done with modelling clay, moulded as strokes and crushed and coupled with effects from plastic divisionism. The exhibition proposes an intense baby portrait entitled *Kid*, released in 2009.

The research by **Elisabetta Di Sopra** is expressed above all through the use of video language in order to investigate the most sensitive dynamics of everyday life and its micro-unexpressed stories, where the female body plays a central role as guardian of memory and by virtue of its expressive language.

There are two core foundations within her practice, one of which is centered on the relationship between body and substance, the other on body and memory, corresponding respectively to her first and second video production phases.

The "*Funny Show*" (2009), showing children watching the adult world and smiling, is a reflection on the world of adults unable to show themselves as good models to imitate.

Lello Gelao's research, persevering for some years along the lines of the theme of the portrait, is based on an essential and intense figuration, thanks to his attention to mass media and photography.

His figures, laid on anonymous, imperceptible, timeless and spaceless backgrounds, are clear, luminous images of intense color schemes, realised in a two-dimensional perspective and deprived of every sentimental connotation but which one can communicate a deep psychological resonance.

In his paintings the artist usually inserts a single character, as in the work proposed in this exhibition, entitled "*Child*", alone, physically and psychologically detached, succeeding in capturing a particular moment, almost the exact second in which time stops and everything looks motionless, silent. His work is characterized by empty atmospheres and rarefied environments and speaks of solitude, melancholy, and suspended time.

Kaia Hugin's series of video performances titled "Motholic Mobbles", is carried by an uncompromising physical presence. In these short films, Hugin, as an artist, appears as a mix between a slapstick mystic and a gymnastic version of the avant-garde film pioneer Maya Deren, who in the middle of the last century experimented with combining film, choreography and movement into a surrealistic and personal expression. In Hugin's mobbles, the character, just as Deren's female figures, goes through different ritual (compulsive) actions: she hangs, floats, moves backwards or bores herself down into the soil. Thematically, these works revolve around different existential questions, and they are characterized by an unsettling atmosphere. *Angry Boy / Happy Boy* (Motholic Mobble part 10) is part of Kaia Hugin's series of surreal video performances. In this short film, Hugin's 10-month-old child – suspended over a plinth like living work of art – appears to demonstrate uncanny physical strength.

Kaja Leijon's projects explore the transition between imagination and reality. Examination of the characters' power of empathy and of how the characters relate to fiction are recurring elements in her films. The artist deals with how film as a medium influences the way we see and interpret the world.

Turning Trick cites François Truffaut's 1957 short film *Les Mistons*. The film is about five boys who spend an entire summer spying on and chasing after two lovers. Truffaut's work thematizes childhood and the boys' awakening masculinity and sexual desires, imbedded in childish games. Kaja Leijon's work ignores the plot of the original short film to concentrate solely on a single excerpt in which the boys chase each other, suddenly stop, and pretend to have a shoot-out. She restages this scene in her own film, but with a very simple difference: her protagonists are female. A tense atmosphere permeates the entire film, which erupts when the protagonists suddenly come face to face. The artist's wordless presentation places the role of women right at the center: the passive object of observation in the French original becomes the active subject.

Cristina Pavesi's videos refer to art history, classical genres of landscape and still life, adding the inevitable sense of the inevitable cyclicality of life. The process is philosophical, because it seeks out knowledge of oneself and of the world through short metaphors, brief thoughts of which the image is interpreter. Still-life in the studio is linked to ancient painting and was used to express the Vanitas concept in the best way. Thus, in its video-still life, the genre exalted by the time factor and the movement revives, thus expressing indeterminacy and anxiety. What emerges from this new interpretation a sense of precariousness and continuous evolution of change that contrast the illusory aspiration to the status quo typical of the genre of traditional still life.

In **Can can**, A musical box, as a symbol of childhood cheerfulness, is hammered until it stops playing and is totally destroyed. Everything happens while the music of Mozart Don Giovanni is playing as a call for pity.

In **Ore 13** it is lunchtime: a doll, smiling politely, is going to eat its lunch which consists of little toy soldiers. A metaphor of war? Not only; it's the 'Inevitable Fate' that lightly hangs over those who feel strong and in a fighting spirit.

Venue

Muratcentoventidue-Artecontemporanea

Via G. Murat 122/b – Bari (Italy)

Opening Saturday January 27, 2018 at 7.00 pm

Period January 27 – March 10, 2018

Opening hours from Tuesday to Saturday, from 5.00 to 8.00 pm

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Rita Casdia, was born in 1977. She graduated painting at the Academy of Fine Art, Palermo. She continued her study at the Academy of Fine Art Brera, specialization in Art and New Technologies. Festival: 17.KURZFILMFESTIVAL, backup, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, 39° Festival du Nouveau Cinéma di Montreal, LOOP- Video Art Festival & Fair, Barcelona, XIII International Image Festival, Manizales, Colombia (special mention), Crosstalk ed7 Video Art Festival Budapest. Solo Shows: Ferite come fessure, Fondazione Museo Pino Pascali, Polignano a Mare, It's you, Muratcentoventidue, Bari. Group Shows: Premio Ariane de Rothschild, Palazzo Reale, Milano, 14° Premio Cairo, Museo della Permanente, Milano, Video.it, Fondazione Merz, Torino, Suspended territories and other italian stories, MUU Galleria, Helsinki.

Cristiano De Gaetano (Taranto, 16 August 1975 – Martina Franca, 10 May 2013) attended the Art Institute in Grottaglie, taking part in the ceramics course and in the didactic shows of the Institute. He designs the Advertisement Manifesto in 1995. He obtained his degree in painting in 2001 at the Art Academy in Bari. During his studies he experienced as a photographer, scenographer and camera operator, experiences that come useful for his next collaborations on special projects such as works of video art or prestigious magazines. After his first solo show (2000) he starts exposing his artworks in many group shows in Italy (Taranto, Bari, Bologna, Milano, Roma) and, starting from 2006, some international art fairs in Bologna, London, Paris, Basel, New York e Miami where he has been acquired by some important collections. He took part in many institutional exhibitions such as Il Museo e il suo territorio at the Fondazione Museo Pino Pascali in Polignano a Mare (Bari) and in 2011 at the 54° Biennale Di Venezia, the Italian Pavilion, the section dedicated to Puglia.

Elisabetta Di Sopra was born in 1969 in Pordenone. She is graduated in fine arts from Brera Academy in Milano. She is currently the curator of Maurizio Cosua video art competition, within the Francesco Pasinetti festival. She collaborates with Ca 'Foscari University for the Short Film Festival in the promotion of video art, and with the Italian Cultural Association Archivio Carlo Montanaro at Venice's Fabbrica del Vedere as well. Di Sopra has showed her work, among other places: Karachi Biennale 2107; Le stanze dei frammenti, MARCA, Catanzaro; solo exhibition "Possibili sensi", Galleria Pizzinato, Pordenone; group exhibition Artist-run Gallery Galaway/Irlanda; Paratissima 11, Torino; body interference, Künstlerhaus/Vienna; VideoYearbook 2012, 2014; solo exhibition SAUDADE, galleria Muratcentoventidue, Bari; Stazione eretta. video d'artista, Careof, Milano; solo exhibition TRANSIENT BODIES, CaosArtGallery, Venezia; STILL FRAME || Videoarte dall'Archivio Bevilacqua La Masa, Venezia Collective Shades Videoart festival, Moscow / Russia.

Lello Gelao was born in Bari where he lives and works. He is graduated at the Academy of fine Arts Bari. He founded the cultural association Muratcentoventidue Artecontemporanea in 2007. His work has been shown in Germany, France, India and in Italy at Bologna, Bolzano, Genova, Malo (Vi), Milano, Verona. Among his latest exhibition: solo exhibition Uomini, Galleria Muratcentoventidue-Artecontemporanea, Bari 2010; solo exhibition Uomini, galleria Peter Tedden, Düsseldorf 2010, solo exhibition Invisible Present, Galleria Muratcentoventidue-Artecontemporanea, Bari 2013; among his latest group exhibition: Kunststart art fair Bolzano, 2008, Quadriennale – Düsseldorf 2010, Verona ArtFair 2011, Contemporaneamente, Galleria Spaziosei, Monopoli (Bari) 2012; Sotto il segno dello Zodiaco, Galleria Spaziosei, Monopoli (Bari) 2015.

Kaia Hugin was born in Oslo in 1975. She graduated with an MA in Fine Arts from the National Academy of the Arts in Bergen, Norway in 2011. She also has a background from contemporary dance and studies in Art History. Hugin has showed her work, among other places, at Whitechapel Gallery in London, UK, La Capella in Barcelona, ES, Frankfurter Kunstverein, DE, LOOP in Barcelona, ES, Hayward Gallery, UK, Gallery Luda in St. Petersburg, RU, Stiftelsen 3,14 in Bergen, NO, Sassari, Sardinia, IT and The Annual Autumn Exhibition in Oslo, NO. Solo exhibitions includes Muratcentoventidue Artecontemporanea in Bari, IT (2011), Oslo Fine Art Society, NO (2013), Vigeland Museum, NO (2015), Fotogalleriet Format in Malmö, SE (2016), Sandefjord Fine Art Society, NO (2017) and North Norwegian Art Centre, NO (2017).

Kaja Leijon (b. 1980 Tromsø) lives and works in Oslo. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts Oslo and CalArts in California. Her work has been shown at MELK Oslo; SPACE 4235 Genova; KONTORprojects Copenhagen; Kunsthalle Mainz, Germany; UKS, Oslo; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; Muratcentoventidue, Bari; Fotogalleriet, Oslo, and Taiwan National Museum of Fine Arts, Art Taipei 2013, Taipei Høstutstillingen, The Annual National Exhibition, Kunsternes Hus, Oslo, Rencontres Internationales, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2012 Rencontres Internationales, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, Høstutstillingen, The Annual National Exhibition, Kunsternes Hus, Oslo, Botkyrka Konsthall, Stockholm, Where dreams cross, Stockholm, Fotogalleriet.

Cristina Pavesi was born in 1966 in Milan, where she lives and works. She graduated in set design at Brera Academy of Fine Art, Milan. Her work has been shown at Maria Cilena, Milan; Vanna Casati, Bergamo; .BOX, Milan; KOMA, Mons; CACT, Bellinzona; CARMA, Rome; Contrast gallery, Barcelona; H2O gallery, Barcelona. At several International Video Art Festival: Facade, Bulgaria; Espacioenter, Canarias; Lumen, New York; FILE Video Festival, Sao Paulo; Traverse Vidéo, Toulouse; Festival Miden, Greece; FONLAD, Coimbra; MIVA, Ecuador; A corto di donne, Pozzuoli; AVI Festival, Jerusalem; Projector, Madrid; Mutoscopio Videoart festival, Mexico; Filmideo, New Jersey; BANG Videoart Festival, Barcelona, (first prize); Time is love 8 international video program; Visionaria, Siena; KLEX, Malaysia; AVIFF, Cannes; Berlin Directors Lounge; Madatac, Madrid; Streaming Festival Netherlands; Cologne OFF; Videolookink, Barcelona; Video Capitale, Villersexsel; No Gloss, Leeds; Video Bites, Berlin.