

Press release

Muratcentoventidue Artecontemporanea

Swimming Pool

Elena Knox, Sissa Micheli, Liliana Orbach, Jaye Rhee, Debora Vrizzi

Galleria Muratcentoventidue Artecontemporanea is pleased to present ***Swimming Pool***, a group exhibition featuring works by Elena Knox, Sissa Micheli, Liliana Orbach, Jaye Rhee and Debora Vrizzi.

The pool is a powerful, effective and eloquent symbol of the contemporary world. It is one of the most loved places in the collective imagination, a favorite stage of cinema and literature.

The exhibition is dedicated to the theme of the pool, seen as a physical and mental place in balance between an artificial dimension and a natural condition.

The pool is full of meanings, even discordant: it is a symbol of luxury but also of a rediscovered relationship with nature (water, the body: relaxing and letting go), it is artificial and natural, container and space used for freedom. It mixes sensuality, ambiguity (countless movie scenes, books, music videos) and death (the corpse in the pool is another recurring symbol that links luxury to despair, as in the work of Elmgreen & Dragset "*Death of a Collector*"). It also represents a space to go through (movement), or to float (stasis), full and empty.

And there is the presence of the water that for centuries has not ceased to fascinate and inspire athletes, artists and ordinary people: crystalline, restorative, now mysterious, immense and terrible, now intimate and familiar.

In the works proposed in this exhibition, the swimming pool is a representative or symbolic element of undoubted significance.

Elena Knox, Sissa Micheli, Liliana Orbach, Jaye Rhee and Debora Vrizzi deal with the same issue using different creative languages such as photography and video.

Elena Knox is an Australian performance and media artist in the field of communication media. After obtaining her PhD at the College of Fine Art (currently UNSW Art & Design) at the University of New South Wales in 2015, she began presenting creative works highlighting the relationship between humans, icons and robots in Japan and other countries.

Elena's works propose and disrupt embodiments of gender, interrogating how women are performed and perform themselves in the varied media and contexts of our age.

In her artistic practice, she amplifies human impulses to totemism, idolatry, and fetishism, by which we attempt to commune with parahuman phenomena, and to push back against our ultimate loneliness in the galaxy. This endeavour often harnesses the rapidly changing field of

emergent technologies.

Chinoiserie (Ode to Wuhan) documents an improvised, guerrilla performance by Elena in the swimming pool of Hongguang Jianguo Hotel in Wuhan, China. Elena was artist-in-residence at K11 Art Village in Wuhan when she found this pool and spa, advertised by the hotel as open and usable by guests.

Wuhan city has an optimistic, chaotic, old-meets-new, under construction/destruction atmosphere. *Chinoiserie* is the artist's attempt to find an entry point to cultural immersion, in a fast-flowing China awash with contradictions.

Sissa Micheli masters the subtlety and the suggestiveness of story-telling. Hers are poetic etudes of elemental passion, everyday torments, intimate and rare moments of striking emotional intensity.

Micheli's is a complex world of a strong cinematic quality where reality and fiction are accomplices in constructing a narrative structure of psychological drama. Sometimes autobiographical, sometimes based upon someone else's experience as reported in a newspaper, these narratives of uncomfortable intimacy are autonomous fragments of a hard life.

In a gentle, hardly visible process of sublimation, Micheli iconises matrixes of basic human relationships, thus providing the viewer with a dictionary of "received emotions" that while universalised retain their sincerity and amazingly powerful authenticity.

In the photo series I think ***I got caught in a trap (2007)***, Micheli takes herself as protagonist to the Villa Wierer (built by Franz Prey) in Chienes, South Tyrol, erected in the 1970's and slated for demolition in 2008. Micheli explores the interior of this former status symbol of the Wierer family, which as a ruin can be interpreted as a showcase of economic decline – a whole generation of South Tyroleans quickly came into money and soon lost it.

Shortly before its demolition in 2008 it became part of a story aesthetically and narratively based on film. A dense pictorial narration arises that takes on real incidents from the past and turns them into fiction.

Liliana Orbach is an interdisciplinary artist, independent curator, teacher, coordinator of projects and international events related to art. Born in Argentina, she lives and works in Tel Aviv. She works in collaboration with artists, writers, musicians and artists and has also been invited to curate video art programs and lecture in museums and universities.

"It is only as any aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world appear justified." - Based on one of Friedrich Nietzsche's notorious sentences found in his book "The Birth of Tragedy," Liliana Orbach relates to an existentialistic dilemma that has been underlining her creative process for many years, confronting her to the basic question that asks about how the artist is able to relate to difficult instances within the human condition using aesthetics as means of expression. As if, for the sake of art, one could see the sparks of beauty, within the many instances of ugliness life is confronting us with. As if, for the sake of existence, one would foresee light, within the harshness

of truth. Orbach approaches topics involving many aspects of our existence in a subtle, yet severe fashion. Rather than using an opinionated approach, she leaves open ends, enabling space for further analysis and discussion.

In ***Preludio de una Danza*** what looks like a fun time at the pool transforms into a tense situation in which the water's looping rhythm seems to control its flow over the apparent freedom in which the swimmers are moving. Humanity's desire to take over nature could turn into a dangerous game of unpredictable outcomes. The artist reminds us that humanity's life flows, within the boundaries of nature's powerful kingdom.

Jaye Rhee revels in the space between the ironic and the poignant with work that simultaneously incorporates video, photography, and performance. Born in Seoul, South Korea, Rhee moved to the United States where she lives.

She presents an installation entitled ***Swan***. Her work explores the evasive nature of authentic desire. By focusing on the tension between "real" desire and "fake" objects of desire, as embodied by images—in the broadest sense of the word— her work presents "real fakes" and "imageless images."

For example, in her public bath house series, *Swan*, *Polar Bear*, *Niagara*, performers move in public baths against a background of wall paintings depicting swans in a lake, a North Pole scene with polar bears, and the Niagara Falls. These scenes exist in words, as well as in collective memory shaped by culture. But where do they actually exist? The swan, the polar bears of the North Pole, and the Niagara Falls, all exist without existing: they are idealized images of the nostalgic imagination.

Her goal is to create a new visual space in which artifice evaporates through the very naked presentation of images as naked materials. This "honest artifice" would ultimately lead one into an experience of reflection about one's own nostalgia.

Debora Vrizzi is an Italian video artist and cinematographer.

Over the years, she has been focusing on cinema and video art. She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna and the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome (2006) under the direction of maestro Giuseppe Rotunno. During her studies at CSC, she learnt how to use the light to develop and assist narration.

As a performer and filmmaker, Debora Vrizzi has always worked with images, movement, photography and the human body in order to display a reflection on personal and collective identity. This purpose has been reached by using semi-narrative structures and/or a symbolic-conceptual structure. Besides, she sometimes turns on a more realistic way of exposing this reflection, by choosing the documentation of the real life and the autobiography.

Her artistic projects have two main directions: the first one is characterized by playing with her own body that becomes the main character of her works. This way of performing is strictly based on a cinematographic system. Therefore, her living paintings are real «mises en scène». The second direction is utterly different. In fact, she chooses to focus on the cinema of reality.

In **Frame Line**, the artist revisited the myth of Penelope and the Ulysses' journey. In doing so, she aims to describe the expectation and the conceptual and physical thickness of feelings. Hence, she reflects on the tangled and ineffective strategies of Love.

Penelope is patiently waiting for Ulysses, whereas the hero has been enchanted by the Sirens and decides not to go back home. The lady sews her hairs like a spider's web, in order to make her never-ending waiting seductive. She does not want to leave her throne. The wind wraps her in the air. Its breath seems to blow even in the water, moving Penelope's skirt in a sort of dance. *Frame line* is the space between one frame and another. It is the line that divides feelings from reason. It is the empty and apparently immobile space of the waiting.

Venue

Muratcentoventidue-Artecontemporanea

Via G. Murat 122/b – Bari (Italy)

Opening Saturday October 19 , 2019 at 7.30 pm

Period October 19– November 30, 2019

Opening hours

Monday ,Tuesday and Wednesday only by appointment

From Thursday to Saturday 5.30 - 8.30 pm

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https://www.instagram.com/muratcentoventidue_bari

Elena Knox was born in Australia, lives between Japan and Australia.

Knox's works are presented in première venues internationally. Recent shows include: Video Art and Experimental Film Festival, New York; Beijing Media Art Biennale; *Nine Tomorrows*, PowerLong Art Center Hangzhou; *Beholder*, Hong Kong International Commerce Centre (ICC) 118-storey façade; *Algorithmic Art*, Hong Kong City Hall; International Symposium on Electronic Art; Athens Digital Arts Festival; Cairo Video Festival; Simultan Festival Romania; Festival Silêncio Portugal; *Video Vortex* (Kochi Biennale).

Knox's experimental projects are nominated for various awards, recently Australian Art Music Awards and LA Underground Film Forum. She is a research fellow in Intermedia Art and Science at Waseda University, Tokyo.

<http://www.elenaknox.com>

Sissa Micheli was born in 1975 in Brunico in Italy. From 2000 to 2002 she studied at the Schule für künstlerische Photographie in Vienna under the direction of Friedl Kubelka and completed her diploma studies between 2002 and 2007 at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts with Professor Franz Graf, Professor Gunther Damisch and Professor Matthias Herrmann, graduating with honours. Sissa Micheli was awarded several prizes and grants, including the Vienna Academy prize and the Premio Pagine Bianche d'Autore, Milan, in 2008, the London and Paris studio scholarship by the BKA in 2009 and 2013, and the Austrian state grant for artistic photography in 2015. In 2016 she was awarded the "Artist of the Year" prize by the South Tyrol Artists' Association and the HGV. Her work has been shown in numerous national and international individual and group exhibitions and is represented in public and private collections. Sissa Micheli lives and works in Vienna.

<http://www.sissamicheli.net/>

Liliana Orbach, interdisciplinary artist, independent curator and lecturer. Born in Argentina. Lives and works in Tel Aviv, Israel. She completed her PhD in Arts at the Multimedia department of Poznan Art University, Poland after earning her Master of Arts Degree at the California State University, Fullerton, U.S.A. Among her solo shows: Dot.to.Dot. project. Installation at Wschodnia Gallery. Lodz, Poland (2019); The Eureka Bliss. Installation at Artspace Tel Aviv, Israel (2015); Oasis Edge. Installation at the II International Art Biennial - Buenos Aires. National Museum of Fine Arts. Buenos Aires, Argentina (2002); Among her group exhibitions and international events: Dot.to.Dot. project. Video installation at Tetramatyka - International media festival. Lviv, Ukraine (2019); Transit Message - International mixed media project. Bergamo, Italy (2018); For Members Only. Video work at KOLNOA - Israeli Film Festival. Prague, Czech Republic (2018); Di Libe Brent a Shrek. Video work at ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany (2017); What has risen may sink and what has sunk may rise. Video installation at the Artists' House - Tel Aviv and WRO Atelier. Wroclaw, Poland (2013); Goldberg Variations - A different Outlook. Video art and live piano performance. Tzavta auditorium. Tel Aviv, Israel (2008); Videoformes - International video festival. France (2005-07); Video work at The Colors of Water - Exhibition at the Tel Aviv Museum, Israel (2002-04); Installation at Markers, Art and Poetry in Venice. The 49th Venice Biennial, Italy (2001).

<https://www.liliana-orbach.com>

Born in Seoul, South Korea, **Jaye Rhee** graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (BFA, MFA). She lives and works in New York.

Her work has since been exhibited at various international venues, including Albright Knox Art Gallery, Norton Museum of Art, Queens Museum, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Mori Art Museum (Tokyo), Kobe Biennale 2007, The Seoul Museum of Modern Art, DOOSAN Art Center (Seoul), Gyeonggi Museum of Art (South Korea), Leeum Samsung Museum (Seoul), the Centro para os Assuntos da Arte e Arquitectura (Portugal) and La Triennale di Milano (Milan).

Rhee also participated in the Artists' residencies of Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Main 2009, Palais de Tokyo Workshop Program in Paris 2009, Changdong International Studio Program in Seoul 2008, Aljira Emerge Program at Aljira Center for Contemporary Art in New Jersey 2008, Artist in Market Place Program in Bronx Museum in 2005 and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Swing Space Program 2012.

Among her awards are the Yonkang (DOOSAN) Art Award 2011, Franklin Furnace Fund 2010, SeMA Young Artist Grant from Seoul Museum of Art 2010, Arts Council Korea Grant for Cultural Exchange 2010 and 2009, and KoreaAmerica Foundation for the Arts Award 2008.

Rhee also participated in the Artists' residencies of Delfina Foundation in London, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Main, Palais de Tokyo Workshop Program in Paris, Center for Art & Architecture Affairs in Northern Portugal, Changdong International Studio Program in Seoul, Aljira Emerge Program at Aljira Center for Contemporary Art in New Jersey, Artist in Market Place Program in Bronx Museum and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Swing Space Program.

<http://www.jrhee.com>

Debora Vrizzi (1975, Cividale del Friuli) an Italian video artist and cinematographer. As a director of photography, Vrizzi brought her works to many international festivals, such as Cannes Festival, Venice Film Festival, Berlinale and TIFF.

Her video artworks have been shown in personal and collective exhibitions such as: Videoart forum, AlbumArte, Rome, 2019; Fuori Norma, MACRO Asilo Museum, Rome 2018; Artist's Film and video in Italy from The Sixties to Today, MAXXI Museum, Rome / Videoart Yearbook, Bologna 2017; Ibrida, Festival delle arti intermediali, Forli 2015; Maravee corpus, La Loggia Gallery, Capodistria, Slovenia; Mise en scène, with Wang Qing Song, OffiCina Gallery, Beijing, China 2009; Mise en Abyme, 3g Gallery, Udine; Pitti Immagine Award, for IT's International talent support Photo # Seven, Trieste, 2008; 91° Collettiva giovani artisti, Bevilacqua la Masa Foundation, Venice, 2007.