

Press Release

Muratcentoventidue Artecontemporanea

Female Portraits

Maura Banfo, Iginio De Luca, Lello Gelao, Chrischa Venus Oswald,
Anahita Razmi, Özlem Şimşek

Galleria Muratcentoventidue Artecontemporanea is pleased to present ***Female Portraits***, a group exhibition featuring works by Maura Banfo, Iginio De Luca, Lello Gelao, Chrischa Venus Oswald, Anahita Razmi, Özlem Şimşek.

The exhibition offers an original comparison between works that, through different languages, deal with a common issue, the female portrait, a figural tradition that has without interruption followed Western art, adapting itself to the evolution of styles and forms. The female body and the face in particular is one of the oldest and most commonly shown motifs in the visual arts.

The works exhibited in this exhibition portray women and arise from the analysis of a living female body in its complexity, an active subject and no longer the object of male representation, and are pervaded by a feeling of crisis and restlessness that reflects on how the representation of feminine intimacy is no longer anchored in certain meanings linked to codified roles.

After years of restlessness "wandering" to explore the world, **Maura Banfo** finds in Turin, her hometown, her own "nest", where she begins a search through photography as predominant language. Maura Banfo's work from the mid-nineties to the present has marked important highlights in the Italian contemporary art system, with a significant look and presence also at international level. The path of Maura Banfo is characterized by an internal coherence that we rarely find in the work of the Italian artists of her generation. The strength of her work lies in keeping her own creative imprint and her poetic well recognizable, but in a continuous discovery of new facets and points of view. The same applies to the media used: although a preference for photography prevails, she also works with video, design and installation.

Her work includes the production of long writings, shots and drawings, but also the collection of elements belonging to the animal and plant kingdom, such as shells or nests that have certainly been abandoned by their guests. Each of these small worlds is listened to, elaborated and translated into works of a very direct poetry, in which the public can identify itself with and find a private meaning.

Iginio De Luca is a versatile artist, he is a musician and a visual artist, he makes videos, installations and performances. In recent years his poetry has been focused mainly on the production of videos, photographic images, but also on those which he calls *blitz*. Considering them at the turn of urban art and performance, the artist performs actions sometimes flying over planes, other times projecting images or writings on buildings in rapid nocturnal raids, or arriving in places with elements of strong disturbance and visual impact, such as fake election posters. By combining ethics and aesthetics, technology and behavioral actions, De Luca calls for interaction with the environment and the public, denouncing, between irony and commitment, the crisis of values of our time. The use of multiple and different linguistic registers has always characterized his planning and consequently the methodological and operative choices, suggesting that the common denominator in order to undermine the certainties, to break the codes of expressive formalization, to tend a trap to reality, surprising her behind. In "**Duecentosettanta**", a video work made in 2007, we see a relaxed, calm woman's face; the context is natural, a garden, voices, earth, trees and sky. Little by little the landscape flows behind the face, is it the woman who moves or is the background on the back? After having crossed the trees, the woman "lands" again on the lawn but now the world is turned upside down and her face is completely deformed.

This video entrusts to the force of gravity with the possibility of revealing which is our most unconscious and secret identity, simply changing the point of view.

Lello Gelao lives and works in Bari where he attended the Academy of Fine Arts.

For some years, Lello Gelao's research has focused on the subject of portraiture through an essential and intense figuration, thanks also to his attention to mass media and photography.

His figures, silhouetted against anonymous, imperceptible backdrops, sets without time or space, are clear, luminous images, with extremely intense planes of color, rendered in a particular two-dimensional perspective and deprived of any sentimental connotation, but which manage to communicate a profound resonance psychological.

In his paintings the artist usually inserts a single character, as in the work proposed in this exhibition, alone and physically and psychologically detached, managing to capture a particular moment, almost the precise second in which time stands still and everything appears immobile, silent. His work is characterized by empty atmospheres and rarefied environments and speaks of solitude, melancholy and suspended time. In *Flowers*, an oil painting on canvas, depicts a little girl managing to capture an inner dimension full of dreams and at the same time of mystery.

Chrischa Venus Oswald was born in Bavaria in 1984. She finished her Fine Arts studies at the University of Art and Design in Linz (A) with a diploma with honour in 2011. In 2007 she received the Diesel New Art Award Austria for Photography. Her work got exhibited and screened in various

national as well as international shows and is included in private collections, amongst others the video collection of Manuel de Santaren.

The artist works in a range of different media, though mainly with photography, video, video performance or text/poetry – the choice of a particular medium follows her specific idea. Oswald's work is often based on performative or documentary approaches and primarily interested in relationships, the human condition and existential issues.

Personal experiences serve as point of departure to open up individual narratives for the viewer and therefore a world of multiple meanings – in order to engage the viewer and establish a relationship on a visual and conceptual level, to inspire the audience to explore some aspects of life in a new light.

"In Granny's Dresses" is a continuation of exploring her relationship towards her dad's mum who has died in 2014. After the first portrait she had been allowed to take of her in 2005 she had been starting a documentary collaboration with her until her death. In 2014 she created "BED", a videoperformance in her garden, as a tribute to her.

This series of self-portraits features one of her granny's garden dresses in each of the images and one of her objects she took with her when they sorted her belongings. It's putting her self not in her shoes but in her dresses and transferring them from her granny's habitual environment in Bavaria into her living environment in Lisbon at the time of creating the work.

Nothing really gets lost, everything just gets transformed.

Anahita Razmi is a Berlin-based artist whose work revolves around cultural transfers and translocations. Working mainly with video, installation, new media and performance, Razmi's work examines processes of cultural appropriation in which the meanings of existing images, artefacts and thus identities are altered by situating them in another temporal context. In doing so, she often reflects strategies of disarrangement and structures of perception expressed by the mass media of consumer and pop culture against the background of different communities between the West and the Middle East. The Islamic Republic of Iran, with its current political and social conditions and relations, remains an open, ambivalent point of reference.

The work ***Iranian Beauty*** is consisting of a video loop and a framed DinA4 sheet of the 2013 Wikipedia internet entry for "Least Valued Currency Unit". The video is re-enacting an iconic scene from the movie "American Beauty", exchanging the rose petals of the original scene with Iranian Rial banknotes. At the time of production of the work, the lowest banknote 500 IRR is worth less than 3 Eurocent (2019 update: less than 1 Eurocent), which puts Iran at the No1 spot of the Least Valued Currency Unit; the inflation rate rises significantly every year, - in 2012 it was recorded around 40 %. *Iranian Beauty* refers to these precarious numbers, that necessarily need to be

looked at in relation to ongoing and worsening Western economic sanctions. The seduction moment of the quoted movie scene fails: the work is questioning value/devaluation and is relating a western cinematic memory to eastern economic realities.

Özlem Şimşek is an artist and photographer. She holds a PHD in art and design from Istanbul Yıldız Technical University. Her performative video and photographic works focus on official and alternative histories of women's depictions in Turkey with an emphasis on the interplay between representation, multiple modernities, gender and identity. Şimşek appropriates, deconstructs and consequently reenacts representations of women within photography, painting and literature in the context of Ottoman-Turkish history. In her works Şimşek uses performative practice to create a critical point of view on women's representations and pose questions on the concept of identity since women in Turkey have been seen as the symbols of cultural and ideological differences starting from the beginning of the modernization process until today.

"**Big Sister**" and "**Letter**" titled videos are part of "Self-portrait as Modern Turkish Art" project in which Özlem Şimşek poses for the camera and tries to act like the women whom depicted in historical modern Turkish paintings. In the context of this project she creates series of video and photography works which question the representation of women in modern Turkish art and modern Turkish history. "Big Sister" titled video alludes Leyla Gamsız's 1950 dated self-portrait painting in which we see a young woman standing in front of flowers with a stern expression on her face. "Letter" titled video refers to Nuri İyem's 1980 dated painting by the same name which shows a woman who pressing a letter to her chest longingly. These works grow out of a fantasy, questioning "what would happen if a woman who was presented to world in a specific image suddenly came into being trying to get rid of that attributed role?"

Venue

Muratcentoventidue-Artecontemporanea

Via G. Murat 122/b – Bari (Italy)

Opening Saturday December 14 , 2019 at 7.30 pm

Period December 14– January 30, 2020

Opening hours

Monday ,Tuesday and Wednesday only by appointment

From Thursday to Saturday 5.30 - 8.30 pm

Info 3348714094 – 392.5985840

<mailto:info@muratcentoventidue.com>"

<http://www.muratcentoventidue.com>"

<https://www.facebook.com/MuratcentoventidueArtecontemporanea>

https://www.instagram.com/muratcentoventidue_bari

CV

Maura Banfo (1969) lives and works in Turin.

Maura's works have been exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Italy and abroad, including Villa Giulia (Verbania), Palazzo Reale Arte alle Corti (Turin), SPSI Art Museum (Shanghai), Palazzo Birago (Turin), Rivara Castle Paludetto Foundation (Turin), Galleria Alessandro Bagnai (Florence), Castel S 'Elmo (Naples), Corpo 6 Galerie (Berlin), Fondazione Ferrero (Alba), Triennale Bovisa (Milan), Ateliers d'artistes (Marseille), Musée Espace Malraux (Chambery), Gallery AP4-ART (Geneva), Arco (Madrid), De Republica Museum (Rio De Janeiro), Palazzo Bricherasio (Turin), Galleria Civica (Trento), Italian Cultural Institute (Budapest), Fraktal Gallery (Krakow).

Among the various participations we remember in 2012 the Shanghai International Television Festival, 2010 in New York for the Polaroid AIPAD project. In March 2014 she was the only Italian artist in residence at the Fondation pour l'art la Napoule (Mandelieu-Cannes, France). In 2017 she was a guest of the residence Made in Filandia, the Filanda di Pieve a Presciano, (Ar). In 2018 on the occasion of Manifesta # 12 Collateral Events, she was invited in residence in Gran Tour en Italie in Palermo, curated by Michela Eremita and Susanna Ravelli.

Her work is present in many private and public collections (the Gam Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art in Turin, the Racconigi Castle, the Unicredit Private Banking, the Photography Museum in Cinisello Balsamo, the Garuzzo Institute for the Arts Visual, Palazzo Falletti di Barolo Turin, the Castello di Rivara Foundation, Novella Guerra, Made in Filandia, ... to name a few).

<http://www.maurabanfo.com/>

Iginio De Luca was born in Formia on 21 August 1966. He lives in Rome and Turin, teaches Decoration and Multimedia Installations at the Fine Arts Academy of Frosinone. The artist has made several personal and collective exhibitions, in Italy and abroad. Among his solo shows in 2018: Solarium, Spazio Fourteen Artellaro, Tellaro-Lerici, curated by Gino D'Ugo, iailat, Sound Corner, Auditorium Parco della Musica, Rome, curated by Silvano Manganaro. in 2017: Bitter Rice, Albumarte space, Rome, curated by Claudio Libero Pisano. In 2016: Expatrie, home of Architecture, Rome, curated by Giorgio de Finis -In 2015: "Born in Formia and resident in Rome", Galleria Gallerati, Rome, curated by Sabrina Vedovotto. In 2013: Actions, CIAC, Castle of Genazzano RM) curated by Laura Mocchi

Among the group exhibitions in 2018: Kizart, video review, MAXXI museum, Rome, curated by the Nomas Foundation, I Martedì Critici, Academy of Fine Arts of Rome, curated by Alberto Dambroso and Guglielmo Gigliotti. In 2017: Kizart, video review, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, curated by the Nomas Foundation. In 2014: Fragments of Italy, video review, Palazzo Ducale, Genoa curated by Francesca Guerisoli.

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: *Kunstart 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; *What we once were*, Galleria Muratcentoventidue Bari, 2018, Emschergold-Sammlung Tedden, Galerie Münsterland, Emsdetten, Germany, 2018.

www.lellogelao.it

Chrischa Venus Oswald is a German artist, born in Bavaria in 1984, currently mostly living and working in Berlin and Lisbon. She finished her Fine Arts studies at the University of Art and Design in Linz (A) with a diploma with honour in 2011. In 2007 she was awarded the Diesel New Art Award Austria for Photography – whose jury also included artist Erwin Wurm. Her work got exhibited and screened in various national as well as international shows and is included in private collections, amongst others the video collection of Manuel de Santaren. Her videos were selected also for Proyector Videoart Festival, Madrid (ES), in the FUSO Videoart-Festival, MAAT, Lisboa (PT), Femmes' Video Art Festival 2, LACE, Los Angeles (US), extra — experimental trails« - Festival für experimentelle Film- und Videokunst, d21, Leipzig and 2nd OZON International Video Art Festival, Katowice, Poland.

She exhibited in 2012 "The Eye of the Collector" Selected works of the Manuel De Santaren Collection, Villa delle Rose (MAMbo), Bologna and in 2014 in "Family Matters" with Sophie Calle, Nan Goldin, Hans Op de Beeck, Thomas Struth, Jim Campbell, John Clang, Guy Ben-Ner, Courtney Kessel, Ottonella Mocellin+Nicola Pellegrini, Trish Morrisse, Palazzo Strozzi, Firenze.

<http://www.chrischa-oswald.com/>

Anahita Razmi is a visual artist based in Berlin and London. She studied Media Arts and Sculpture at Bauhaus-University Weimar, Pratt Institute New York and State Academy of Art and Design Stuttgart, prior to exhibiting widely internationally in institutions like Museo Jumex, Mexico City, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Kunstraum Innsbruck, Austria, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Germany, Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Germany, The National Art Center, Tokyo and within the 55th Venice Biennale. Her videos, installations and performance works are using and mis-using contemporary parameters of import/export and trade and facilitate settings between a "West" and a "Middle East" in which the meanings of existing images, artifacts and thus identities are put into question. The Islamic Republic of Iran, with its current political and social conditions and relations, remains an open, ambivalent point of reference in her work. Razmi was the recipient of the Goethe at Lux Residency, London (2018), the Werkstattpreis of the Erich Hauser Foundation (2015), the MAK-Schindler Artists and Architects-in-Residence Program, Los Angeles (2013) and the The Emdash Award, Frieze Foundation, London (2011). Her work is included in several international collections like the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, the Museo Novecento, Florence and the Davis Museum at Wellesley College, USA among others. Razmi is an Associate Lecturer in Fine Arts (4D Pathway) at Central Saint Martins, London. Her work is represented by Carbon12 Gallery, Dubai.

<https://www.anahitarazmi.de/>

<https://www.carbon12.art/artists/anahita-razmi/>

Özlem Şimşek is an artist, photographer and academic based in Istanbul. Her works and research focus on representation of identity, gender and multiple modernities. Şimşek holds a PHD in art and design from Istanbul Yıldız Technical University. She is currently Assistant Professor of visual communication design at Istanbul Ayvansaray University.

Her artwork has been included in several personal and group exhibitions Turkey and abroad, in galleries and museums including Malmö Museum, Pera Museum, Elgiz Museum and Istanbul Modern Museum.

<https://ozlemsimsek.com/>

