

PRESS RELEASE

MURATCENTOVENTIDUE ARTECONTEMPORANEA

DESERTI

**Shirin Abedinirad/ Elisabetta Di Sopra/ Julia Charlotte Richter/ Eleonora Roaro
Raeda Saadeh/ Sira-Zoé Schmid**

Muratcentoventidue Artecontemporanea is pleased to present “Deserti” a group exhibition featuring six artists of various nationalities who have chosen to set their works in the deserts of our planet.

The desert is not only a natural element, it is, at the same time, a different place that has always exerted a great fascination.

The metaphysical depth of a space outside of time, irreducible to the measure of man, minimal and silent crossed only by the unstoppable flow of the wind has inspired extraordinary works of art and architecture.

Surreal and often shrouded in a certain mysticism, these inhospitable but magnetic landscapes have long provided artists with the space and the place for their works.

The artists on display Shirin Abedinirad, Elisabetta Di Sopra, Julia Charlotte Richter, Raeda Saadeh, Sira-Zoé Schmid use different languages such as photography and video.

Shirin Abedinirad is an Iranian visual artist and writer based in Utah, US. She explores notions of identity, unity with nature, and the boundless essence of being through various mediums including video, performance, land art, and installation.

Born in Tabriz, Iran in 1986, Shirin began her artistic journey with painting before going on to earn degrees in graphic design and fashion. While researching conceptual overlaps between fashion and conceptual art, she became fascinated by performance and started staging public interventions confronting issues of gender, sexuality, and human compassion back in Iran. Shirin's practice took a pivotal turn after a 2013 desert experience led her to create land and installation works centering natural imagery, using minimalist arrangements of elemental materials like water, mirrors, and light. Currently splitting her time between the United States and overseas projects, Shirin continues her conceptual exploration into the essence of selfhood and its relationship with nature through varied types of new media art.

The artist presents “**Gliss**” in which she addresses one of the biggest problems of living in the desert: the lack of water. At first glance, the circular mirror, partially covered in gold sand, seems like a small pond. Only later do we realize that, in fact, it is the sky, reflected on the dunes. By altering our perception of nature and offering us a distorted vision, the artist challenges the human mind and the natural elements.

Known nationally and internationally, **Elisabetta Di Sopra** lives and works in Venice. A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, her artistic research unfolds through video works, installations and graphics, addressing themes related to the emotional sphere, family relationships and practices of care with particular attention to the dimension of pain and fragility that characterize our existential condition.

Focusing on the use of video to address issues related to the female condition and the role of women in contemporary society, she uses a narrative characterized by simple and incisive actions that highlight the psychological dynamics underlying daily life, family relationships, the female body and social roles.

The body, which speaks through minimal gestures, is the basis of her work, becoming a metaphor for our being in the world.

She has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions both in Italy and abroad.

In *Senza tracce* (2023) - the latest video produced and shot during a trip to the Wadi Rum desert - the artist, after walking on the dunes, felt the need to erase the footprints left in that place: a choice in stark contrast with the spasmodic overexposure that characterizes our time, where what matters is leaving a mark on this world.

Julia Charlotte Richter (* 1982 in Gießen) is a German video artist. Her films are always about people. In her videos, she explores the meaning of present in different stages of age and awareness, and depicts how consciousness, behavior, wishes and desires blend together. On the basis of sensitively arranged scenes, metaphorical places of transition are created.

It shows how young people reject adulthood because they perceive the adult world as a threat. Conversely, memories penetrate the saturated or hyperactive everyday life of adults: the memory of what one once was, of what one believed or believes one is on the ladder of success.

"Point Blank" refers to a film scene from "The Misfits" (1961) that is now re-enacted and further contextualized. In the original scene, the recently divorced main character Roslyn (Marilyn Monroe) rises up against three worn-out cowboys and, in the middle of the desert, confronts the men with all their lacks and lost dreams. In *"Point Blank"*, we see a young woman wandering around in surreal desert landscapes, a journey into the remoteness of the world and her own inner life. With every step out into the desert, the girl descends into her own depths searching for a place that seems to be suitable for her emotions and words. Unlike Roslyn, the young woman now refers to absent addressees: "Liars", "Murderers" and "Dead Men" she screams and turns around wildly. The words, which spread like bullets in the air, fall back on her. Except for a faint echo, there is no resonance at this place that depicts the obsessions of a distorted, patriarchal society and has become a dramatic backdrop of yearnings within the collective history of cinema. Where Roslyn was able to elicit a terrified astonishment from the three men, the character in Julia Charlotte Richter's video remains to herself and unheard, the desert as the only witness of her manifesto, her anger and her strength.

Eleonora Roaro (Varese, 1989) is a visual artist and researcher based in Milano. She holds degrees in Photography (BA – IED, Milano), Visual Arts and Curatorial Studies (MA – NABA, Milano), and Contemporary Art Practice (MA – Plymouth University, Plymouth).

Her practice is based on the moving image, with a particular focus on cinema history, archaeology of cinema, and archives. Engaging with a diverse range of media, including video, photography, performance, AI and virtual reality, she frequently revisits, reenacts, and remediates older devices and iconographies to understand the influence that technologies and images have on our perception and cultural imagery. As such, display and duration – particular the concept of the loop – are key elements of her practice. Her current research, based on archives and oral sources, investigates the relationship between architecture, spectatorship and urbanism in 20th-century cinema theatres.

Robert Smithson's earthwork *"Spiral Jetty"* (1970) is located at the Rozel Point peninsula on the northeastern shore of the Great Salt Lake, Utah. This place, characterized by its rose colours, contains deposits of oil that had been subjected to unsuccessful drilling attempts for decades. The art installation had been underwater for thirty years; nonetheless, as stated by Geoff Dyer in the book *"White Sands"*, visitors kept going on the site. In 2002 a drought revealed the work again, and from that moment it has been mostly visible. In the video-performance *"Vanishing Point"* the camera is positioned next to the last stone of the Spiral Jetty. From that point, the artist walks towards the lake until she disappears in the water, as had happened to Smithson's work for a long time. The distance covered is an anthropometric form of measuring of the ongoing process

of desertification, climate change and entropy. The title refers to the chapter in Jean Baudrillard's "America" (1986) dedicated to the American deserts among which he also describes Salt Lake City and the Great Salt Lake. "The unfolding of the desert is infinitely close to the timelessness of film", he states when he describes the unreal and abstract atmosphere of these solitary and empty landscapes.

Raeda Saadeh (*1977, Palestine) was born in Umm al-Fahm in 1977 and studied at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, where she lives today. She is an internationally renowned photographer, her works are exhibited all over the world. Her means of expression are, in addition to photography, installation, video and performances

Saadeh's work uses the body as a tool to explore identity, gender and space as well as the relationship between place and the self. Her performances, videos and photo works are preoccupied with borders as a cultural, topographical and physical phenomenon.

In her work, the artist often takes on different personae, which can be interpreted as radical feminist statements and as conceptual comments about social and religious issues. In her enactment of mythical figures and fairy tale characters Raeda Saadeh decontextualises Israel's idealised landscapes, exploring the actual situation of the occupied areas and the crossing of social and (especially) gender-specific, standardised borders.

The two-channel video performance **Vacuum** shows the artist vacuuming the barren hills of Palestine. This absurd but simple act not only casts a critical shadow on gender roles, but also relocates the act of vacuuming and cleaning, which is traditionally ascribed to women, from the private sphere into a politically charged space. The act of vacuuming desert is an impossible and impractical task, symbolizing the daily efforts of Palestinians facing challenges, with real change seeming out of reach. This is reminiscent of the myth of Sisyphus, who pushes a rock to the top of a hill only for it to roll back down.

The piece portrays the determination to carry out tasks despite their absurdity, embodying the spirit of resilience and perseverance that Palestinians hold onto despite ongoing difficulties.

Sira-Zoé Schmid is an Austrian artist who has developed her research mainly through photography, text, installation and performance. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna in the class "Fine Arts and Photography" with Matthias Herrmann and Martin Guttmann, graduating in 2013. She lives and works in *Vienna and Salzburg*.

She has received numerous scholarships, participated in residency projects and her work has been exhibited in various international institutions and galleries.

Developing her research in the field of photography in a broad sense, Sira-Zoé Schmid begins a journey that explores its multiple potentialities. The analysis of all media and sociocultural issues that surround us are reflected in her work.

Deserts have been the inhospitable and constantly evolving environments of her video performances. In 2017 Schmid began her series of video performances "*Desert Flower*" in the American Mojave Desert. A woman, the artist, wearing a dark dress and a small blue parasol and turning her back to the viewer, walks along a lonely path in the desert until she disappears into the horizon. During the artist residency in Lanzarote and Gran Canaria in 2022, Schmid continued her performance series *Desert Flower* with a second part. In „***Desert Flower I***“, the video she presents in this exhibition, with a clear and poetic visual language she shows us a woman in a surreal landscape of austere beauty, an ideal space in which to take an introspective journey into one's inner world.

Luogo

Muratcentoventidue-Artecontemporanea

Via G. Murat 122/b – Bari

Inaugurazione

Sabato 18 gennaio 2025 ore 19.00

Periodo

18 gennaio– 28 febbraio 2025

Orari di apertura

Domenica, lunedì, martedì, sabato solo su appuntamento

Mercoledì , giovedì, venerdì dalle 18.00 alle 20.00

Info

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CV

Shirin Abenidirad was born in 1986 in Tabriz, Iran. Beginning her art career with painting, she has studied Fashion and Textile Design at Dr Shariaty University in Tehran.[The principal focus of her dissertation was conceptual art and the ways in which it relates to fashion.

She has also studied video art under the supervision of the Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami who selected her along with a few other artists to participate in his workshop at IBAFF Film Festival in Murcia, Spain, in 2013. At the closing ceremony of the Festival, Abenidirad presented a performance art piece which she dedicated to the American video artist Bill Viola in his presence at the event.

In 2014, Abenidirad was awarded a one-year artist scholarship to engage in the cultural projects of Benetton's Fabbrica research centre in Treviso, Italy.

In 2015, Abenidirad's Mirrored Zuggurat was featured on Cockatoo Island, Australia, for the two-day Underbelly Arts Festival. In 2016, her Sulūk sculpture was put on display on One Belt One Road Visual Arts Exhibition taking place at Sotheby's Hong Kong Gallery. Organised by the Hong Kong Federation of Women, the event illustrated the importance of female visual artists among the Belt and Road nations across Asia, Europe and Africa. Among other artists whose works were exhibited in this Gallery were Yayoi Kusama and Joana Vasconcelos.

From April–July 2017, Abenidirad's video art Gliss was displayed in Andorra Land Art International Biennale. From August–September 2017, she collaborated with Dionne Lee on a video exhibition titled Eleven and a Half Hours, which was featured at Aggregate Space Gallery in West Oakland. Curated by Shaghayegh Cyrus, the exhibition focused on striking similarities in the everyday lives of the two Iranian and American women, even though their locations and cultures were different. In the same year, the video of her Babel

Tower was exhibited at FILE ANIMA+ Electronic Language International Festival in São Paulo, Brazil. Since October 2017, *In Between (Part II): So Far* has been on view at Mana Contemporary which offers six installations by six women that work to shape Iranian contemporary video art.

Elisabetta Di Sopra (Pordenone, 1969), Venetian by adoption, graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice with a thesis dedicated to Bill Viola. She has always used video as a sensitive expression of emotions, which she makes tangible, through a clear vision of being here and now without mannerisms or aestheticisms. Curator for several years of the Maurizio Cosua video art competition, within the Francesco Pasinetti Festival she is a member of the Cultural Association Archivio Carlo Montanaro alla Fabbrica del Vedere. She was a professor at Ca' Foscari University in the Master of Fine Arts in Filmmaking and still collaborates with the Ca' Foscari Short Film Festival in the promotion of Italian video art. Her works are present in the Videoarte Yearbook archive at the Museum of Modern Art (Mambo) in Bologna. She has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions both in Italy and abroad.

Among her solo exhibitions: 2024 *Tracce*, Museo CAOS Project Room Ronchini, Terni; 2022 *Limiti*, Muratcentoventidue Gallery, Bari; 2019 *The Care*, Muratcentoventidue Gallery, Bari; 2020 *Il Limite*, National Archaeological Museum of Venice; 2018 *Pietas* Bugno Gallery, Venice; *Possible Senses*, Parco Gallery, Pordenone

Among the group exhibitions: 2024 *From and in the landscape*, Zago Foundation, Asolo (TV); *She-Wolves_erotism>love>body*, *Re_Exhibit_Rewind* Online Gallery, curated by Laura Leuzzi; 2022 *Wish You Were Here*, Casa del Commiato, Bergamo; *Work for the Lace Biennial – Lace Museum*, Venice; 2020 *Links*, Etherea Gallery, Genoa; *Thirty-three stars*, PICO Palace of Culture, Reggio Calabria; *Secret traces of memory XII ed.*, Grimaldina Tower of Palazzo Ducale, Genoa; 2018 *Body concrete*, Museoteatro della Commenda, Genoa; *Restless Waters in Italian Videoart*, Greece; 2017 *Karachi Biennale*, Pakistan; 2016 *The Rooms of Fragments*, Marca Museum, Catanzaro; 2015 *Body Interference*, Künstlerhaus, Vienna; 2014 *Recto/Verso*, CasermArcheologica, Sansepolcro (Ar); 2013 *Body in abstraction*, St John's College, Oxford (UK); *Hetero Q.B.*, Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea do Chiado, Lisbon (P); *Terna Prize 05*, Rome; 2012 *De rerum natura*, Lab 610 XL, Sovramonte (Bl); *Norms for the revolution*, Video art exhibition, Volksbühne, Berlin (D); *Hydrographies*, former convent of San Francesco, Pordenone; *Per-Lumina*, Palazzo dei Battuti, San Vito al Tagliamento (Pn); 2010 *FareCorpi*, teaching Anatomy at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, Magazzini del sale, Venice; Finalist at the Festarte video art festival "violenza invisibile" at MACRO Rome, PremioArteLaguna 2009, Venice.

Julia Charlotte Richter (*1982 in Giessen, Germany) is a video artist.

She studied Fine Arts in Kassel (Germany), Portsmouth (UK). She completed her studies in 2010 and then moved to the University of Fine Arts in Braunschweig to study as a master's student with Corinna Schnitt. After graduating as a master's student, Richter received a residency grant in the Willingshausen artist colony in 2011. In 2012 she received the Young Art Essen scholarship, awarded by the Kunsthaus Essen and the Kunstring Folkwang. [With the support of the Women's Cultural Office NRW, the artist spent an exchange scholarship in Tbilisi in 2013. In 2014 she received a work grant from the Kunstfonds Foundation.

Julia Charlotte Richter's works have been shown internationally in numerous screenings and exhibitions, including Manege Moscow, Georgian National Museum in Tbilisi, Filmfestival Max-Ophüls-Preis Saarbrücken, Kunsthaus NRW Kornelimünster, Shortfilmfestival Hamburg, B3 Biennial of the Moving Image Frankfurt or Coreana Museum of Art in Seoul. She has received several grants such as the Young Art Residency in Essen (Kunstring Folkwang/Kunsthaus Essen) in 2012 or a work grant from the Stiftung Kunstfonds in 2014. In 2017 she received a grant from the Kunststiftung NRW as well as a travel grant from the Hessian Cultural Foundation. She is currently working on her project *The gift of being prepared*, funded by Hessenfilm, and a collaborative project with Lisa Seebach, funded by Stiftung Kunstfonds.

Eleonora Roaro (Varese, 1989) is a visual artist and researcher based in Milano. She holds degrees in Photography (BA – IED, Milano), Visual Arts and Curatorial Studies (MA – NABA, Milano), and Contemporary Art Practice (MA – Plymouth University, Plymouth). Currently, is a lecturer in Aesthetics, New Media Aesthetics, Multimedia Communication, and Modern Art History at NABA, Milano (BA Cinema and Animation, BA Creative Technologies, MA Creative Media Production). Additionally, she teaches Phenomenology of Contemporary Art at IED, Milano (BA Product Design). Her work has been shown since 2011 in many galleries and museums such as La Triennale (Milano), Fabbrica del Vapore (Milano), Casa degli Artisti (Milano), CAMERA (Torino), MACRO (Roma), CAMEC (La Spezia), Casa Cavazzini (Udine), E-Werk (Freiburg), Maison de la Culture (Clermont- Ferrand), La Friche (Marseilles), Istituto Italiano di Cultura (Madrid and Prague). As a research fellow at the Università degli Studi di Udine, she contributed to the 2019 project "VR and AR in the valorisation of cultural and art heritage". From 2020 to 2024, she was part of the project "Sensing Dolce Vita: An Experiment in VR Storytelling," which won the MISTI Global Seed Fund (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA; SISSA, Trieste, Friuli-Venezia Giulia). She has also authored articles focusing on cinema architecture and VR reconstruction (L'Avventura, 2020; Alphaville, 2021), film programming in Udine (MHRA, 2024), cinema theatres in visual arts (LabCom, 2021), and the work of Lynn Hershman Leeson (Mimesis, 2019).

Raeda Saadeh was born in 1977, she lives and works in Jerusalem. She received her Bachelor of Fine Art and Master of Fine Arts from School of Visual Arts in New York.

Selected solo exhibitions include A.M. Qattan Foundation, Ramallah (2019, 2000); Rose Issa Projects, London (2012, 2010); Gallery Anadiel, Jerusalem (2003); and School of Visual Arts, New York (2000). Group exhibitions include Cultuurcentrum Brugge, Bruges (2015); Busan Museum of Art, Seoul (2014); Victoria & Albert Museum, London (2012); Australian Centre for Photography, Paddington (2012); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2011); Konsthall C, Sweden (2011); Beirut Exhibition Center (2010); The Bluecoat, Liverpool (2010); Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern (2009); Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2008); Musée National d'Art Moderne et Contemporain d'Alger, Algeria (2008); Kunsten Museum of Modern Art Aalborg, Denmark (2007); and Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall (2007). She has also participated in the Sharjah Biennial (2007) and the Sydney Biennale (2006).

Saadeh has been honored with a number of grants including the bronze Chimera, ICASTICA the first International Arezzo Biennial of Art (2013) and the Young Artist of the Year prize by the AM Qattan Foundation, Ramallah (2000).

Saadeh's work can be found in the collections of Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Fonds Regional d'Art Contemporain de Lorraine, Metz and Magasin, Grenoble.

Sira-Zoé Schmid (*1985 in Baden, Austria) is a visual artist with a focus on photography, performance, video and text.

She lives and works in Vienna & Salzburg. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna in the class «Fine Art and Photography» first with Matthias Herrmann, later with Martin Guttmann and graduated in 2013.

Working within the "extended field of photography" Sira-Zoé Schmid explores the different (multilayered) possibilities of multimedia pictorial invention. The examination of all media and sociocultural topics that surround us are very important to her and are conducive to her artistic work.

In 2016/17 her entire focus was on her multimedia project „Past | Present | Future“ a comprehensive archive about women as art producers. During her „One -Year Grant for Photography 2018“ from the Austrian region Salzburg, Sira-Zoé Schmid concentrated on developing her new projects in addition to several solo exhibitions, performances and talks. In 2019/20 she mostly worked on her solo exhibitions “Blocks of Serenity Vol I - III”

that have been shown at Bildraum 07, Vienna, Schloss Goldegg & Kunst im Traklhaus, Salzburg. While on Artist in Residency in Lanzarote & Gran Canaria in 2022 Schmid continued her performance series Desert Flower by a second part. Her photographic film „Happy Slapping“, part of the multimedia project „Daily Warfare“, has been shown in 2023 as part of the comprehensive exhibition “Sade. Freedom or Evil” at the CCCB Museum in Barcelona, curated by Alyce Mahon and Antonio Monegal. In 2024 she participated at PLATEAU BLO Artist Sauna, part of the Salzkammergut 2024 program and University of Arts Linz, with her feminist project LONG LIVE THE VULVA.

She has received many grants and participated in numerous residency projects. Her work has been shown in several institutions and galleries in Austria and abroad, such as the CCCB, Museum der Moderne Salzburg, ada, Vent Gallery, Bildraum 07, Kunst im Traklhaus and many more.