



CHRISTIAN ZANOTTO - CENTAUROMACHY

23 DECEMBER 2017 / 27 JANUARY 2018

CURATED BY SONIA ARATA

RED STAMP
ART GALLERY
AMSTERDAM

Red Stamp Art Gallery is pleased to present CENTAUROMACHY, Christian Zanotto's personal exhibition; the show is curated by Sonia Arata and takes place from the 23rd of December 2017 till the 27th of January 2018 at the gallery's location, in the heart of the historical center of Amsterdam.

On display are artworks which, after their premiere at important international events, are exhibited for the first time in the Netherlands: recent works on crystal, videos and an holographic theca which "bring on stage" powerful and enigmatic representations of intense charm; complex compositions emerge from a captivating and mirroring black background with their multiple, precious and refined details.

These virtual sculptures have been created with mastery through a unique use of digital mediums which combines the plasticity and the material physicality of traditional painting and sculptural techniques with the intangibility, the lightness and the ubiquity of the numerical universe; it's an artistic investigation which involves continuous experimentation and studies on perception and vision, in search of new expressive forms and unprecedented shifts of knowledge, with the elaboration of a visual cosmos that's constructed as a symbolic alphabet, in whose imaginary past, present and future mix.

The common thread is the theme of centauromachy and of battle, a constant tension of conquest and supremacy, a vital tangle of forces and impulses, in the sense of a chromatic-compositional tapestry, where conflict and equilibrium alternate, a field of intricate dynamics of creation and destruction, weaving in which the intertwining of opposites generates varied configurations; the mythological figure of the centaur encompasses the oscillating balance between the mighty instinctual energy, the brutal and uncontrolled force, the thrust of impulses and the light of intellect, rationality, wisdom and discernment: two opposing spheres which, in their union, can give rise to harmonious or scary results.

The artworks contain a comprehensive collection of links to contemporary and universal thematics and events, which range from the scale of the self and the individual, to that of the masses, till the sphere of arcane and hieratic entities and obscure powers, allusions to implied directives and hidden plots, in a broad and emblematic outline of various aspects of our era.

Amongst the artworks on display:

MOON DOLLAR BATTLE (2017), large artwork on crystal panel presented for the first time on occasion of the Biennial "The Latitudes of Art", for the third edition Germany/Italy at the Doge's Palace of Genoa, curated by Virginia Monteverde, with critical presentation by Carmelo Strano. The work is a reference to the competition for the conquest of the moon, symbol of a utopian aim towards the unreachable, in a new Babel where ancient and modern humanity, Eastern and Western elements, weapons, machinery for the moon landing and technological research come together in a sort of contemporary metope in militaristic version; the entire surface of the relief, almost a large map with metallic colours, is covered with one-dollar bills, where the famous motto reads "In God We Trust". Next to this, the video installation MOON DOLLAR BATTLE STEREO SCENES (2017): on two screens placed side by side four sculptural sets, taken from the body of the aforementioned group, rapidly alternate in dynamic specular sequences, performing in a paradoxical "crossfire" from the monitors' "windows": it is almost a visual strafing, an explosion of weapons and fires translated into digital light, connection with the binocularity of the look and analogy between the "aggressiveness" on the viewer's eye and the martial theme, in the in the near flash blindness caused by the quick jerks of movement, light and colour.

Wanting to explore the way in which the human mind views and creates images and investigate the changes in this during various historical periods, these two works exploit and test perceptive and stereoscopic mechanisms: renderings of the figures are obtained by means of photos taken from three different angles and in different color ranges. These images are juxtaposed in the wall piece and displayed in looped series in the video scenes, creating a strong three-dimensional effect and visual impact.

HOLLYWOOD BATTLE (2017), the artist's first exemplar of fine art print on baryta paper, exhibited on the occasion of the event "Layers of Art" at the Vigado Palace in Budapest, is flanked by the video of the same name: the figuration unfolds through a chromatic-pictorial strip, with various transparencies and nuances, in which the subject of the struggle is elaborated in a more classical, Michelangesque way, emphasizing the poses of the characters, the volumes of their muscle masses and the skin of each individual figure, which is covered by its own "decoration", almost an incision, recalling elaborate tribal tattoos.

The holographic theca HIMSELF-PORTRAIT (2017) has been specially created in response to the recent invitation to exhibit at the first edition of ETHEREA, a multimedia art exhibition curated by Virginia Monteverde at the Sant'Agostino Museum and Doge's Palace of Genoa, with a presentation by the art critic Viana Conti and the philosopher, sociologist and massmediologist Derrick de Kerckhove.

This work is centered on the theme of the self-portrait interpreted in a contemporary key. An animated bust puts the viewer face to face with the digital space. This actual dimension that is still to be probed and with which we still need



to learn to relate is bordered by the physical boundary of a theca, in the center of which the artist virtually places himself, thereby producing a shortcircuit.

The work alludes to many issues, including the notion of digital self that, in its most extreme implications, leads to the idea of identity as appearance, avatar, holographic automaton, incorporeal "golem": such a concept, together with the developments of genetic engineering and futuristic hybridizations between the biological and mechanical, points towards a new "eternity".

Is it the portrait of a human face, the one we are looking at, or is this the representation of an android that replicates it? Various problems concerning individuality and uniqueness, naturalness and artificiality are implied; in this era in which scientific research and theory are also completely subverting the traditional concepts of space, time and matter, Christian Zanotto chooses the holographic projection to represent a vision of the self and of the personality that is taking more and more an elusive and ethereal shape.

Sonia Arata, Amsterdam, December 2017

Images: above > "GABRIEL #2", 2016 - Front cover > "MOON DOLLAR BATTLE", 2017 - Back cover > "HOLLYWOOD BATTLE", 2017

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