

The Line of Sight

Thordis Adalsteinsdottir
Emanuele Becheri
Adrian Paci
Renata Poljak
Giada Giulia Pucci
Moira Ricci
Jelena Tomašević
ZAPRUDER Filmmakersgroup



ZAPRUDER Filmmakersgroup, *Cordiale. Studio sulla visione binoculare. Ritratto di dama B e G*, 2017, photographic print, 60 x 53 cm each

RITA URSO artopiagallery
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Lo sguardo del ritratto non guarda nulla, e guarda il nulla
Jean-Luc Nancy in "Le Regard du portrait"

RITA URSO is pleased to open the exhibition ***The Line of Sight***, which presents a selection of works already shown in the gallery since 2001, gathering them around the fascinating and mysterious theme of gaze. It is the glance that "exposes" the subject in painting and presents it to our eyes, revealing the invisible. Its implications refer not only to the relationship between the artwork and the observer, between what is looked at and who is looking at it, but also to the creative process itself and the making of work of art. In the exhibition space all gazes of the works sink into our eyes and always remain relevant in a continuum of visual relationships, hence the title of the exhibition. The viewer finds himself ideally enveloped and observed, almost scrutinized. The mechanism that emerges is a mutual exchange, a dynamic that runs on different temporal levels and provides a device for reflecting on the contemporary world and art itself.

Thus, in *Gauguin* (2010) of the artist **Thordis Adalsteinsdottir**, the figure's wide-open eyes open onto ours. The temporal dimension called into question is the dreamlike one that stimulates a deep state of melancholy and instability of the self. Gauguin is imprisoned on a flat surface, in absence of perspective, because it is abundantly covered with bright paint. At the same time the harmonious flower patterns, in which the body seems to be immersed, indicate a redeeming dimension, and therefore a possibility of happiness and rebirth. The photographic image of **Renata Poljak** *Alice Or Where I Am Not Afraid* (2002) also refers to a dreamlike fantasy: the artist is self-represented with closed eyes, perhaps asleep, lying on a field of red poppies. Here, a state of uncertainty and disorientation in front of the reality of Croatian society and communism are merged, with an awareness mixed with the desire to go further.

The present prevails motionlessly in *Life Interest* (2008) by **Jelena Tomašević**. The time appears suspended in the gaze of a woman oppressed against a large window, representing the impossibility of realizing herself in a world where stereotypes prevail, a black and white reality deprived of any emotional element. The painting seems to burst into an everyday life scene where places of affection overturn in mental prisons, difficulties and psychic disquiets, small and big violence that upset daily serenity of domestic menage.

In *20.12.53-10.08.04 (gemellini)* (2005/2006) **Moira Ricci** weaves present and past. She intrudes into old photographs of her mother to indelibly imprint her presence even in a time that has not been shared. The artist's eyes observe her, inquisitive but affectionate. With a brave look willing to put into play her own emotionality, she generates a mirror effect in the viewer of her work: it is an act of love towards her mother, a

form of elaboration of loss, which however takes further strength from the radical questioning of the relationships between the viewer and the object of the gaze.

The smiling couples, taken according to a "happy family" cliché, which **Adrian Paci** pictorially immortalizes in *Icons* (2001), seem not to look directly at the viewer. Their eyes, set, are probably directed towards the lens of a camera. Those faces have already lost their individual identity and what counts to them is the new identity of the couple, which the photographer tries to fix. With simplicity, the artist is addressing the collective power that social gaze has, expressing an ambiguous attitude that first seduces the spectator to enter a sort of private album of memories and then prevents him from penetrating it through placing an ideal model in front of him.

The present is also connected to the **Emanuele Becheri's** gaze that, powerfully directed to the viewer, seems to reveal the dimension of the genesis of his work. Drawings *Va, pensiero...* (2013) become the condition in which the figures can accomplish and define their world. The artist self-portraits himself in bizarre ways, experimenting with different disguises, mutilated, helped by sticks that serve to maintain his fragile balance in an upturned world, and laying bare his own condition as an irreverent marionette that laugh at themselves and at their audience, to show the artist's infinite potential for metamorphosis.

The enigmatic and disquieting gaze, presented by **ZAPRUDER Filmmakersgroup** in *Cordiale. Studio sulla visione binoculare. Ritratto di dama B e G* (2017), provides a reflection internal to their artistic and cinematographic practice, on the consequences of a stratigraphic conception of time, often made of overlaps rather than scrolling. The cross-eyed, lateral gaze, on the one hand, fragments the vision by dividing it into two points of view, on the other, subtracts from it the perspective encounter that allows a deep dimension, typical of 3D cinema.

Giada Giulia Pucci with *Umano. Vestizioni al suk di Torino, 4/10/20* (2020) represents, finally, a timeless, absolute, primitive look. A witness to the memory of the past but also a documentation of the future. The scraps found in the street with which she dresses and protects herself become symbols of humanity, her gaze is similar to that of all peoples of all times and records all the existing worlds. It is an instrument for survival because, abstracted from the context, it analyses reality and extends beyond it, towards nothingness, towards the end of the world.

The eyes of works on show are reflected in ours and introduce a plurality of possible timelines and worlds. The reciprocity intrinsic to the act of seeing therefore constitutes not only an encouragement to know and to become aware of the reality that surrounds us, but also to resist the difficulties of dark moments, such as we are experiencing, also thanks to the support that those gazes around us can provide.

Thordis Adalsteinsdottir (Reykjavik, 1975) lives and works in New York. She has exhibited in major museums and galleries world-wide, including exhibitions at The Reykjavik Art Museum, the Knoxville Museum of Art, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter in Oslo, Den Frie Udstilling in Copenhagen, Konstakademien in Stockholm and the Royal College of Art in London. In 2008, Adalsteinsdottir was a participant in the prestigious Carnegie Art Award for Nordic Painting. In 2010 she exhibited at Artopia Gallery, Milan with *Have no fear*.

Emanuele Becheri (Prato, 1973) graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence in 1995. His work shows an idea of expanded drawing through various modes and means, his latest works are often linked to video. Becheri has exhibited frequently in Italy and abroad including solo shows at MAN, Nuoro (2013), Museo Marino Marini, Florence (2009) and PAC, Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Ferrara (2009). He also took part in important group shows at MART, Rovereto (2013), American Academy, Rome (2012), Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Guarene (2009) and Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato (2009). Represented by Rita Urso, among his exhibitions at RITA URSO Artopia Gallery, Milan, we remind the solo show *Va, pensiero...* in 2015.

Adrian Paci (Shkoder, 1969) lives and works in Milan. He left his country of birth, Albania, in 1997 during the turbulent times of political uncertainty and instability. Since then, his self-referential work develops the theme of displacement and loss, often reflecting on the trauma of separation and migrant nostalgia. He represented Albania twice at the Venice Biennale, in 1999 and 2005. His works have been presented in numerous international exhibitions, such as solo shows at MAXXI, Rome (2015), Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montréal (2014), Galeries Nationales du Jeu de Paume, Paris (2013), Kunsthaus Zurich (2010), Kunstverein, Hannover (2008) or CCA, Tel Aviv (2008). In 2001 he exhibited at Artopia Gallery, Milan with the solo show *Home Sweet Home*.

Renata Poljak (Spalato, 1974) uses different medias: videos, film, installations and photos. Her works have been shown at numerous national and international solo and group exhibitions, biennials and film festivals. She received many awards, like Golden Black Box for the best short film at Berlin Black Box Festival held in Babylon Cinema in 2006, or the T-HT award – one of the most important contemporary art awards in Croatia, in 2012. Her films were shown in Prospective Cinema (Prospectif Cinéma) in Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. In Palais de Tokyo Renata Poljak's film and video works were screened during November 2012 and in 2013 her solo show at Stephan Stoyanov Gallery in NYC was selected as best in show for January in NYC by Village Voice. In 2009 she exhibited at Artopia Gallery, Milan with *I need to believe in something*.

Giada Giulia Pucci (Geneva, 1974) lives and works between Turin and London. Her works have been presented in some solo shows: Galleria FormContent, London (2009), Villa Capriglio, Turin (2007), A+M Bookstore, Milan (2005), Teatro delle Commedie di Livorno (2004); and group shows: Fortezza Vecchia, Livorno (2009), Assab one, Milan (2007), Castello Colonna di Genazzano, Rome (2006), ArtandGallery, Milan (2005), Galleria Guidi, Accademia di Belle Arti Bologna (2002). In 2008 and 2010 she exhibited at Artopia Gallery, Milan with *ARTOPIA_008* and *009_010* respectively.

Moira Ricci (Orbetello, 1977) lives and works in Italy. Her work (photography, video, installation), often autobiographical, probes individual and social identity, family history, home and the original ties with territory, interweaving technological invention to rediscover the image of popular appurtenance. She received many awards, like First Riccardo Pezza Award (2000), Location1's International Residency Program, New York (2007), 23rd Gallarate Pezza Prize (2009). Her works have been presented in several national and international solo and collective exhibitions, including at Leeahn Gallery, Daeigu (2014), MAMBO (Museum of Modern Art of Bologna), Bologna (2013), Galleria D'Arte Contemporanea Laveronica, Modica, Ragusa (2012), Strozzi-Palazzo Strozzi, Florence (2009), Centre Pompidou, Paris (2009), Pavilion of Contemporary Art, Ferrara (2009), White Box, New York (2008). In 2006 she exhibited at Artopia Gallery, Milan with the solo show *Interfuit*.

Jelena Tomašević (Podgorica, 1974) lives and works in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. She graduated from the school of fine arts in Cetinje, Montenegro. Her work has been shown in several museums: the Kunsthalle Fredricianum, Kassel, Germany, Center for Contemporary Art Podgorica, Montenegro, National Museum of Montenegro, Whitebox Art Center New York, USA, the 9th International Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, Turkey. She also represented Montenegro/Serbia at the 51st Venice Biennial. In 2017 she won the 23rd edition of the Onufri Prize, at the National Gallery in Tirana, Albania, curated by Gaetano Centrone. Represented by Rita Urso, she exhibited at her gallery in Milan with the solo shows *Just kidding*, *Apparent servitude* and *Mixed Memories* in 2007, 2010 and 2019.

ZAPRUDER filmmakersgroup is an art-film venture founded in 2000 by David Zamagni (Rimini, 1971), Nadia Ranocchi (Rimini, 1973) and Monaldo Moretti (Recanati, 1972), based in Roncofreddo and dedicated to the exploration of the moving image. They are Italian directors and visual artists, creators and producers of films, video installations and live performances aimed at filming. Their collective name refers to the filmmaker Abraham Zapruder, author of the famous frames that captured the Kennedy assassination. In 2011 their 3D filmic productions were awarded at the 68th Venice Film Festival. In 2016, they received the MAXXI Prize for Contemporary Art. In 2020, they participated at the International Film Festival – Berlinale and at 2020 Art Quadriennale FUORI. Supported by Rita Urso, in 2015 they were exhibited for the first time at RITA URSO Artopia Gallery, Milan with the solo show *Fault*.