

EPIMELEIA Elena Mazzi

OPENING

Thursday, 8 February
6pm-10pm

9 February - 22 March
Monday-Friday 3pm-7pm

Artopia Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of **Elena Mazzi's** (Reggio Emilia, 1984) solo exhibition, a site-specific project for the new venue, entitled *Epimeleia*, a Greek term of Socratic origin that properly indicates self-care. The artist returns to exhibit at the gallery after her duo show with Ella Littwitz in September 2022.

Algid, at times surgical, - writes **Adriana Rispoli** in the text that accompanies the exhibition - *Elena Mazzi's visual alphabet hides a deep holistic feeling, egregiously intertwined with militant positions that make her a brilliant interpreter of ecofeminist visions. Science and anthropology, botany and sociology condense into an eclectic yet organic artistic production, in which the need for harmony with nature passes through the recognition of the importance of community, as the only true core of belonging of the individual.*

Epimeleia moves from this premise, an exhibition consisting of three bodies of work that testify to the coherence of both Elena Mazzi's aesthetic and conceptual research. The works on display, spanning from video, sculpture and photography, all contribute to the visualization of the same message: the care and search for harmony between body and landscape.

Welcomes the visitor, at the ground floor, the installation *Written and unwritten dance* (2023), dedicated to a lesser-known version of the Taranta dance, the "Pizzica Serpentata Cegliese", symbolised by the snake. The archetypal dimension of the wide, precious cloths that stretch sinuously on the floor, imitating precisely the movement of the snake, is juxtaposed with the collective dimension of *POÇ* (2023), which in the Friulian language means well. The film, a poetic reflection around a rock-cut pool, is a transposition of the artist's recent participatory project carried out in the mountains of Friuli, with the community of Moggio Udinese.

The upper floor is, instead, transformed by Elena Mazzi into an intimate space. Stills from the video *Encounters* (2021) frame an imaginary pool on which the "organic jewelled sculptures" *Becoming with and unbecoming with* lay suspended. The cast silver cetacean vertebrae dialogue with volumes made of Murano glass, a material at the same time liquid and solid. The series, begun in 2018 during repeated stays in Iceland, is presented here in a brand-new production.

The exhibition *Epimeleia* turns the gallery into a theater for a ritual practice in which water is the central element, conserving an ancestral thaumaturgic value of healing, purification and cure. The artist will be present during the opening and a critical text by Adriana Rispoli accompanies the exhibition.

Elena Mazzi (Reggio Emilia, 1984) lives and works in Turin.

After studying at the University of Siena (IT) and the IUAV of Venice (IT), she spent a period of training at the Royal Institute of Art (Konsthögskolan) in Stockholm (SE).

Starting from the examination of specific territories, in her works, she revisits the cultural and natural heritage of the places intertwining stories, facts, and fantasies transmitted by local communities, to suggest possible resolutions to the human-nature-culture conflict. Her working methodology, close to anthropology, favors a holistic approach aimed at repairing the fractures in society, which starts from observation and proceeds by combining different knowledge. Her works have been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions, in institutions such as der TANK in Basel (CH), MADRE in Naples (IT), ar/ge kunst in Bolzano (IT), Sodertalje Konsthall in Stockholm (SE), Whitechapel Gallery in London (UK), BOZAR in Brussels (BE), Museo del Novecento of Florence (IT), MAGA of Gallarate (IT), gamec in Bergamo (IT), mambo in Bologna (IT), albumarte in Rome (IT), Sonje Art Center in Seoul (KOR), Palazzo Fortuny in Venice (IT), Fondazione Golinelli in Bologna (IT), 16. Quadriennale in Rome (IT), GAM in Turin (IT) 14 Istanbul Biennale (TR), 17. BJCEM Biennale del Mediterraneo, COP17 in Durban (ZA), Istituto Italiano di Cultura in New York (USA), Bruxelles (BE), Stockholm (SE), Johannesburg (ZA) and Cape Town (ZA), Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa of Venice (IT). She is the winner, among others, of Cantica21 promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, and of the 7th edition of the Italian Council promoted by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage. Elena Mazzi is currently pursuing a PhD at Villa Arson in Nice (FR).

Adriana Rispoli is an independent curator and art historian whose interests are mainly focused on art in public space, site-specific art projects and environmental issues. She has collaborated in curating exhibitions and interdisciplinary projects with numerous Italian and international institutions including the Venice Biennale, Museo Madre, Real Bosco and Museo di Copodimonte, Fondazione Morra, Museo Pignatelli | Casa della Fotografia, Paestum Archaeological Park, Certosa di San Giacomo Capri, Palazzo Incontro Rome, Palazzo Ducale Massa Carrara, Overtaci Museum, Aarhus Denmark, Palazzo Italia Belgrade, Serbia, MSU Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb, Croatia, Zoma Museum Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, PiSt Istanbul, Town House Cairo, CCA Tel Aviv, State Museum Thessaloniki. Currently in her third year of a Ph.D. program at the University of Salerno and working as a curator at Palazzo Diedo, BerggruenArts&Culture Venice.

Artopia Gallery opened in February 2001 with Marzia Migliora's exhibition *In punta di piedi* (On tiptoes), curated by Emanuela De Cecco. The gallery promotes emerging and mid-career Italian and international artists with an extensive program of exhibitions, mostly site-specific and curatorial projects. The intent is to offer a critical and innovative reading of the contemporary through the experimentation of multiple languages and practices that include film, digital media, performance and design. In the fall of 2023, the gallery changed locations, moving to the courtyard of the same building that has housed it for more than two decades. The new space, a former late 19th-century workshop in the heart of Milan, was designed by Studio Martinelli Venezia. Since summer 2022, Artopia has been organizing the festival NUCRÉ, sponsored by the Region of Puglia: a set of contemporary art events aimed at enhancing the cultural and anthropological heritage of the Apulian territory.