

Ordinary Wounds 平凡的伤痕

Rachele Maistrello

Text by Elena Forin

From 28.11.2024 to 31.01.2025

Rachele Maistrello (Vittorio Veneto, 1986) lives and works in Bologna. She trained at the IUAV University in Venice, the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste in Zurich. Her research is articulated along different lines and employs digital sources and tools together with analogue components or those linked to forms of craftsmanship. Photography plays a central role and is used together with other forms of expression to narrate the connection between the individual and the environment, and how they mutually contaminate each other in defining the sphere of identity. Over the years, she has exhibited in group and solo shows in Italy and abroad, including PAC Museum, Milan (2023); Ville Périchon, Niort (2023); Kunsthalle Bratislava, (2023); Palazzo Reale, Milan (2023); Scuderie del Quirinale, Rome (2023); MAXXI Museum, Rome (2021); Hamlet, Zurich (2020); Kunstverein Bielefeld, Germany (2020); Inside Out Museum, Beijing (2019); La Triennale, Milan (2018); Photo España, Madrid (2018); Fotomuseum Winterthur (2018); Manifesta 12, Palermo (2018); Unseen Fair, Amsterdam (2017); Museo Pecci, Prato (2017); Museo di Fotografia, Cinisello Balsamo (2012); MSUM Museum, Ljubljana (2013); Ca' Rezzonico Museum, Venice (2013). In 2024 Maistrello is among the winners of the thirteenth edition of the Italian Council.

Artopia Gallery opened in February 2001 with Marzia Migliora's exhibition *In punta di piedi*, 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.

Artopia is pleased to present, on Thursday 28 November 2024 the exhibition **Ordinary Wounds** 平凡的伤痕, first solo gallery exhibition of the Italian artist **Rachele Maistrello** (Vittorio Veneto, 1986).

The project, conceived for the two floors of the space, traces, through an accurate selection of works, the **Diamonds** series in which the artist has been engaged since 2018. The saga, divided into three narrative chapters (*Green Diamond*, *Blue Diamond* and *Black Diamond*) investigates the relationship between man and nature through a speculative use of the photographic medium and scientific investigation. The cycle consists of three archives that meticulously reconstruct Gao Yue's life through company records, correspondence and photographic and video footage. The narrative begins in the China of the 90s, when the protagonist, a figure as verisimilar as the artist's alter ego and with a deliberately fragmented and complex personality, is hired by the Green Diamond company to test new technologies through her own body.

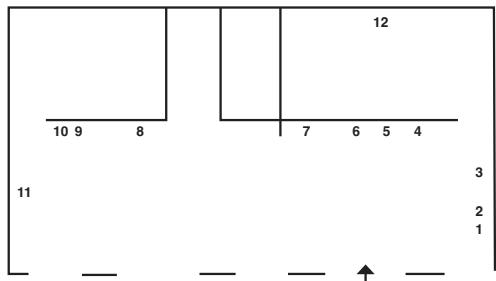
The exhibited works, a series of photographs of various formats, depict the workplaces of Gao Yue and his colleagues: interiors, offices, waiting rooms, closed and underground spaces that become places of the oneiric. Environments without human presence, in which the only space-time coordinates are given by the presence of objects such as desks, floors with computer cables and everyday technological tools. The photographs, all shot in analogue and dominated by flashlight, offer a cross-section of the artist's practice, characterised by the use of colourful, disorienting silhouettes. Maistrello's two-dimensional cut-outs are often unimportant images taken from the web, which, once printed on cardboard and physically inserted into space, activate visual and semantic short circuits. Fantastic traces that, in their materiality and through the grain of the film, transform anonymous and ordinary spaces into sites of dreams.

On the ground floor, unpublished works from **Black Diamond** (2024-2025) line the central hall of the gallery, in which Maistrello investigates the geological dimension of the depths as a dimension of the unconscious. The body of work is part of a broader research on trauma and how it affects not only on a behavioural and familial level, but also on a biological one, creating a deep wound. In the back room, the video *Darklines* (2024) is presented for the first time: the voice of Fen Lin, a colleague of Gao Yue, recounts her own involvement in the secret Black Diamond protocol, which involved a study on intergenerational trauma.*

The upper floor displays works from the first chapter of the saga, **Green Diamond** (2018-2021, produced thanks to the Inside Out Museum in Beijing, winner of the Graziadei Prize and presented in China, Switzerland, France and Germany): the artist's book *Gao Yue* 高跃 collects all the autographed texts, while a selection of photographic pieces reveal Gao Yue's face in the company and details of the factory and its workplaces. A line of photographic images leads to **Blue Diamond**, recently exhibited at PAC in Milan and MAXXI in Rome, the second chapter of the saga, aimed at investigating the need for transcendence through totalising and synaesthetic experiences. Key to the cycle is the video *The Hidden Shapes* (2021), winner of the Essenziale/Nctm call, the Lydia award and the Art4future/Unicredit award. "The work investigates the water dimension and questions what exists in the void, what happens in the total absence of sensoriality. The question is: what would the world be like if we had completely new senses to experience it?" In addition to the video, the exhibition features photographic works in large format.

In a close dialogue with the structural and architectural elements of Artopia, the exhibition **Ordinary Wounds** 平凡的伤痕 gathers the main lines of Rachele Maistrello's research. In the hybridisation of practices such as video, installation and photography, the artist probes the relationship between truth and fiction, the effects of misinterpretation, the potential hidden in the unfinished, the relationship between photographic evidence and subliminal space.

*The photographs were taken in Australia for the project "Di rocce, fuoco e avventure", supported by the company Ghella.



GROUND FLOOR

1. Fen Lin's Archive, doc#1, 1998-2024
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
40x55cm

2. Fen Lin's office, 1998-2024
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
40x55cm

3. Black Diamond (experiments Site detail), 1998–2024
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
73x100cm

4. Black Diamond (office detail #2), 1998 – 2024
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
73x100cm

5. Black Diamond The corridor #1, 2024
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
73x100cm

6. The Cave (the Black Diamond protocol), 1998 – 2024
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
73x100cm

7. Snake (nightmare#01) 1998-2024
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
50x70cm

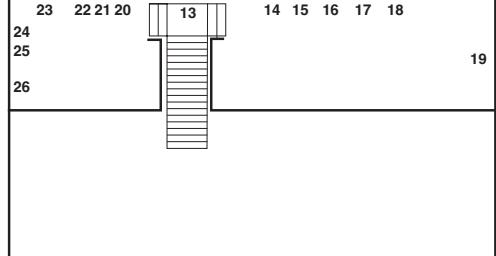
8. Fen Lin's office #2 detail, 1998-2024
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
50x70cm

9. Black Diamond #1 (Fen Lin's office), 2001–2024
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
21x31cm

10. Black Diamond Shape #1, 2024
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
21x31cm

11. Black Diamond (office detail), 1998 – 2024
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
92x125cm

12. The Hidden Shapes Blue Diamond, 1999-2021
video HD, 7' 17"



FIRST FLOOR

13. Gao Yue (doc #01, 1999), 2019
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
21x29,7cm

14. Blue Diamond (office detail), 1999 – 2022
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
70 x 100 cm

15. Blue Diamond Shape #1, 1999 – 2022
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
70x100cm

16. Open Sea, 2001 – 2022
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
70x100cm

17. Blue Diamond (office detail), 1999 – 2022
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
70x100cm

18. Blue Diamond (office detail #2), 2001 – 2022
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
70x100cm

19. Darklines, 2024
Video HD (sound), 8'

20. Green Diamond (factory / 1998 - 1999), 2019
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
29,7x21cm

21. Green Diamond #01 (factory / 1998 - 1999), 2019
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
29,7x21cm

22. Green Diamond # 02 (factory / 1998 - 1999), 2019
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
29,7x21cm

23. Gao Yue (doc #02.B, 1998), 2019
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
50x70cm

24. Gao Yue's office (Blue Diamond), 2022
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
21x31cm

25. Gao Yue's office (Blue Diamond) #2, 2022
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
21x31cm

26. Blue Diamond, #02, 2022
Pigment print on Canson satin paper
Aluminium frame (glass)
30x40cm