

SCAVENGERS

19.01.2024 – 19.03.2024

GALLERIA CONTINUA / PARIS is delighted to present in its Parisian space the first solo exhibition of Marta Spagnoli (Verona, 1994). From 19 January to 19 March 2024, *Scavengers* brings together some twenty works - drawings, large-scale paintings on canvas and gouaches - to explore the concept of otherness - the recognition of the other as different - and the subtle depths of being that lie at the heart of the artist's poetics.

Spagnoli's art explores the complex links between human beings and the natural world. All created in 2023. Her body of work highlights the organic dimension of life, represented in all its forms, from plant to animal to anthropomorphic.

This interconnectedness within the natural world is put into perspective with the concept of otherness, an incessant and symbolic reference and measure for humanity, also thought of as the mechanism at the origin of our biological and spiritual identity. The title of the exhibition is taken from Roberto Calasso's essay *the celestial hunter*, in which one passage explores the figure of the scavenger in the form of the hyena, a "freeloading" creature that feeds on the remains left by other predators. In this book, the predatory attitude of the scavenger is linked to human nature, as having assimilated these characteristics for survival. The verb "to scavenge" refers not only to appropriation and theft, but also to the action of accumulating food and supplies. This second interpretation leads the artist to question the propensity of human beings to integrate these

behaviours. The figure of the hyena, the main subject of the three large-format paintings on canvas on display, *Scavenger II, III and IV*, permeates Spagnoli's rich visual language. The presence of this animal, at once repulsive and fascinating, evokes immemorial archetypes, like a deep, distant echo.

In *Untitled I* and *Untitled II*, the vegetation elements appear in a rhizomatic continuum, growing horizontally, echoing from one canvas to the next.

The subjects represented in Spagnoli's paintings cohabit in a painted surface that alternates between the raw parts of the canvas and the play of colours, between appearance and dissolution, in a constant superimposition of pictorial layers. Thanks to the fragmentation of figuration and space, the works acquire a timeless character, removing the subjects from any tangible context.

The *Seeds for Praying* series, which began in 2019, has been enlarged for the exhibition. The artist focused on a seemingly simple gesture: that of enclosing clay in her hands as a sign of prayer, in so doing shaping this natural, malleable material. This slow, repetitive gesture enabled her to receive and capture the emptiness in her hands, revealing the invisible, recalling the form of seeds.

The works presented in this exhibition thus show plural dialectical relations, where the empty and the full, the animal and the human, the similar and the dissimilar intersect.

Marta Spagnoli (Italy, Verona 1994) lives and works in Venice. She graduated in Painting from the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice. Her solo and group exhibitions include: *Pittura Italiana Oggi*, Triennale di Milano

(2023), *De Leur Temps (7), Un Regard sur les Collections Privé Françaises*, Dunkerque (2023), *De coexistence - 2022 Jinan International Biennale*, Jinan, China (2023); *DA A Gli artisti della Collezione BLM 1998 2018*, curated by Stefano Coletto, Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice (2022); *In primo luogo*, solo show, Galleria Continua, Rome (2022) *HORIZON*, curated by Leo Orta, Cloud Seven, Brussels (2022); *A parallel viewpoint*, curated by Studio Orta, Moulin de Sainte-Marie, Boissy Le Châtel, France (2022); *IL EST ICI, TOUJOURS AILLEURS*, Galleria Continua, Paris and Les Moulins, France (2022); *Earthly Body*, solo show at Galleria Continua, Les Moulins, France (2021); *Italian Twist*, curated by Fondazione Imago Mundi, Gallerie delle Prigioni, Treviso (2021); *Truc à faire*, curated by JR, Galleria Continua, Paris (2021); *Felicia Munera*, for Una Boccata d'Arte, Ronciglione, Italy (2020); *Whiteout*, solo exhibition at Galleria Continua, San Gimignano (2020); *Libere Tutte*, organised by Daniele Capra and Giuseppe Frangi, Casa Testori, Novate Milanese, Italy (2019); *Domaine Autunno*, State of Milan (2019); *Art Zagreb*, Zagreb (2019); *Immersione Libera*, Palazzina dei Bagni Misteriosi, Milan (2019); *102nd Young Artists Collective*, Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Galleria di Piazza San Marco, Venice (2019); *Braintooling*, Forte di Monte Ricco, Pieve di Cadore (2018); *Progettoborca*, a residency programme for Dolomiti Contemporanee, Borca Di Cadore, Belluno (2018); *Opera Prima*, ASP-ITIS, Trieste (2018).

In 2019, she won the first *Artissima for Vinitaly* prize and 2nd prize ex-aequo in the 102nd Young Artists Collective of Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa in Venice. Her works can be found in the following public collections: Fondazione CRC, Cuneo, Italy; Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice; Fondazione Giancarlo Ligabue, Venice.

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