

ENGLISH

GALLERIACONTINUA

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RUDI NINOV

Writing Paintings

21/01/2023 – 07/05/2023

Opening Saturday 21 January 2023, via del Castello 11, 4pm – 9pm.

Open Monday to Friday, 10am–1pm / 2pm–6pm, Saturday and Sunday, 10am–1pm / 2pm–7pm.

From 1 March Monday to Sunday, 10am–1pm / 2pm–7pm.

You are advised to book your visit via the form on galleriacontinua.com.

Galleria Continua is pleased to present “Writing Paintings”, a new solo show by Bulgarian artist Rudi Ninov, in the ex-cinema theatre spaces of its San Gimignano gallery. This exhibition showcases both sculpture and painting; it is a manifestation of the artist’s **current preoccupation with sound and shape**, how they relate to one another and how **sound can be translated into shape and colour** in Ninov’s works.

Ninov, born in Bulgaria, educated in London and now based in Frankfurt, explores the **formal** and the **personal**, the **abstract** and the **figurative**. His work approaches and welcomes diverse shapes, precise colour selection, and decisive borders. **References to music, comic strips, collected objects, written fables and poems** are rife. “Rudi Ninov’s practice develops in an **indeterminate in-between**” declares writer and journalist Franklin Melendez “[...] that magic moment where a gesture–sign is emergent but has yet to crystallize”.

The exhibition’s collocation in the gallery’s space in Via del Castello, in San Gimignano, is indicative of the intermediary visual

space of the artist’s work. The ex-cinema theatre space is hybrid, **both ancient and modern**, part of the public life of the town yet with a private dimension. It is a place where people cross over into a new world animated by contemporary art. In this instance, Ninov’s works straddle a **threshold between opacity and legibility**. He creates a **space for play** where many different mediums and materials are explored, from painting to sculpture. His works, which are dotted throughout the first floor and the labyrinth spaces, satisfy Ninov’s working conditions and exhibition preferences; he works mainly with artificial light and believes his works are best experienced not as a **whole body but as small visual episodes**, broken up by the architectural features of the space.

The paintings, ranging from large to very small formats, are like **visual writings in their re-imagination of familiar imagery**. His experimentation of sign and colour merges with his interest in the time and “duration” of the artwork. The concept of duration is developed in different ways: in his paintings, through the movement of the brushstroke which then enters

into direct tension with the opaque shapes, and in his sculptures, through the accumulation over time of coloured paints on the studio floor. These create a malleable material, resulting in the handles, hooks and loops shaped by the artist.

Often, he works **simultaneously on numerous paintings and sculptures**, giving way to an **overlap of narratives** and perhaps even shapes and forms. This combination of sculpture and painting is most evident in the work "Untitled (Offerings), 2023" which consists of small format paintings supported by a shelf, part of the work, in Acryl resin – a material that due to its high surface hardness is ideal for producing detailed and precise shapes.

Sign and colour are explored throughout many of Ninov's works. He uses the sign, perhaps even a vaguely familiar one, reinvents it and repropose it to us. In preparation for this exhibition, Ninov paced his studio, **saying out loud letters from the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets**. An oral manifestation of a written sign, he wondered how to bring this basic monophonic concept into a shape. The duration of a vowel was pondered while choosing the colours and the artist wondered if a **colour could suggest the length of a vowel**.

Ninov questioned the concept and action of writing just as much, dismantling it completely, rendering it abstract, as a mere composition within a space that has boundaries, a navigatory action whose sign turns right, left, up and down. This deconstruction of sign, shape and action is present in these "Writing Paintings", a **wordplay that describes two different ways in which to relay information or document happenings**. Within this meaning, Ninov proposes his work as a way of painting which is a sort of collection of all the known and unknown language devices. We are therefore welcomed by Ninov into a playful, in-between space where "[...] he opens an invitation that asks us silently but intently to see what we see" (Franklin Melendez).

Rudi Ninov (Teteven, Bulgaria, 1992) lives and works in Frankfurt, Germany.

His practice, comprised of drawing, sculpture and painting, documents intimate bonds between two distinctive approaches within his work: the formal and personal, the abstract and figurative. His work combines opulent shapes within carefully chosen coloured planes and clearly outlined borders, imbued with references to music, collected objects, comic strip cutouts and written notes of fictional stories and poetry. His paintings are like imaginary scriptures which meditate upon compositions of oral and written languages in a form of synaesthetic personal experiences.

His often surprising and virtuous treatment of the painting surface results in immaculate vibrant colours produced by complex processes of layering and washing away of thinly applied paint, which shift away like film slides from one painting to another, creating ongoing dialogues between bodies of work. Often several paintings will come together to create diptychs and larger compositions – a form of diagrammatic exchange which is a reference to Rudi's ongoing interest in cinematographic mechanisms of early animation films. He works in a gestural and tactile format, using both intuitive and reasoned procedures. His work has a unique command of drawing-into-painting, and painting-into-form, demonstrating a kind of spontaneity in a process-based exploration.

He earned a BA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2015 and a MFA in the class of Monika Baer, Amy Sillman and Nikolas Gambaroff at Städelschule, Frankfurt, Germany in 2021.

Recent exhibitions include ORBIT, Messeturm, Frankfurt am Main (2020), The Artist-Collector's Dream (a nice thing), GALLERIA CONTINUA, San Gimignano (2020), Gravity Works Only When You Look Down, Vaska Emanuilova Gallery, Sofia (2019), FOTEL, Sotheby's, Frankfurt am Main (2019).

He is also the recipient of the Linklaters LLP Prize, Germany (2020) and Cultural Perspectives Foundation Scholarship, Bulgaria (2019).

His works are part of the Museum Voorlinden, Caldic Collection, Wassenaar, The Netherlands, Fondazione CRC in Cuneo, Italy and Imago Mundi Collection, in Treviso, Italy.

For more information about the exhibition and photographic material: Silvia Pichini, Press Office, press@galleriacontinua.com, cell. +39 347 45 36 136