

mala voadora x HOŠEK CONTEMPORARY

MARCO SICILIANO - VERGISSMEINNICHT

Opening reception: October 22, 2021, 7 - 10 pm

Exhibition period: October 23 - 30, 2021

Curated by Petr Hošek

'Pro Bono Malum' is how Ludovico Ariosto's epic poem Orlando Furioso ends. An allegory of a modern man who needs madness to survive himself. A body that is ill, insane, searching its senses, so lost that it has landed on the Moon. The lunar landscape is described as the accumulation of objects abandoned on Earth, becoming an opportunity to ironise about the vanity of human occupations and the reliance on magical nonsense. A celestial map of forgotten objects will substitute the Zodiac Man, an archetype of our body, redesigning its shape and symbolic narrative. The psychosomatic body will thus be brought to light, its pain dissected and its sense rediscovered, in order to not forget itself, again.

The Vergissmeinnicht Artist Book will guide the visitor on this journey between the body and the cosmos, thanks to its transparent pages merging with the reader's hands. The book includes texts by the artist himself, Philipp Lange, Superfluo and Petr Hošek. Edited by Linda Toivio. The book is available in 20 copies signed by the artist.

MARCO SICILIANO IN CONVERSATION WITH THE CURATOR PETR HOŠEK

PH: Could we begin by talking about your very first childhood experience with art and how the idea of becoming an artist came to you?

MS: When I was a kid, my family and I would drive down from Milan to Sicily every summer and stop in a region in central/southern Italy to visit it. Year after year, I visited almost all the Italian art cities. Storing so much beauty from an early age certainly influenced my path. I still remember that mystical silence in the cool marble churches with my mum and all those handmade ceramic objects my dad tried to collect by haggling.

I have always found it difficult to define myself as an artist or to define what I do with a single word, not because it is reductive, on the contrary. Perhaps out of respect for those I consider artists.

Quoting the cartoon Balto: It's not a dog, it's not a wolf. He only knows what he is not.

PH: That actually somehow reminds me how I came to art history - through family visits to

monuments and castles mainly in Prague and Czech republic in general. I always found it so fascinating to recall those memories, because they always felt so special, so extraordinary and therefore to remember. Do you remember some monument or an artwork you experienced during those family visits which stuck to your mind deeper than others?

MS: I was very young when my parents started these tours. My memories are a bit hazy but I remember very well a visit to Fabriano, a town in the Marche region, famous for its historical paper mill. It was magical to see how paper is made, I still have some sheets taken during that visit! I also remember the cobalt blue sky from the ceiling of the frescoed vaults of the Upper Basilica in Assisi and the lunar landscape of the volcano Vesuvius.

PH: Tell us a little bit more about your current studies at UdK and also about the previous training as an interior designer.

MS: In 2017 I obtained a master's degree in interior design at the Milan Polytechnic. A type of preparation that leads me to pay a lot of attention to the space and the experience we have of it, as well as allowing me to conceive the project as a whole, from research to practical implementation.

In recent years I have applied this process to artistic research and decided to study again. At the moment I am enrolled in Monica Bonvicini's sculpture class in UDK, carrying out projects in parallel in both Milan and Berlin.

PH: I personally love very much the art space in Milano Edicola Radetzky where you have also exhibited in the past. What was your exhibition 'Blowindow' about?

MS: The exhibition at *Edicola Radetzky* was born out of a conversation with curator Fiorella Fontana after seeing my book *Blowindow - Paris*, a collection of opaque Parisian shop windows that hid the inside of shops.

As the *Edicola* is a kiosk with four windows, we wanted to translate spatially what the book was about and the effect of translucent paper in space.

This time, however, hiding personal objects accumulated over the years and in the houses in Milan that I had left just a few months before moving to Berlin and with an opacity given by the breath that fogs up a glass.

In that exhibition, as in *Vergissmeinnicht*, there was a connection between the two cities: every time I turned on my bedroom light in Berlin, the space in Milan lit up pink.

PH: Let's keep talking about your books because they are a very important part of your artistic creation. I really like the idea that they are unique and mostly connected to your exhibitions. 'A sublime look through the delightful horror of the social networks' - that's how you describe the book of screenshots of porn videos taken by Tumblr. Since part of this series was published by Pornceptual, I have a feeling that through this work people in Berlin might recognise you. How did this idea come to you?

MS: In designing the books, the intention is to invite the reader to enter the book/room, to undertake this journey through the book, where each element is a facet of his or her spatial experience and that of the installation.

Each book is a collection, an archive of objects that takes on value with their accumulation. I started to enclose them in books to give them a value, to turn them into memories that can be touched, leafed through and shared.

Regarding *Take A Pause*, the work was born on social networks where I was obviously censored. From that moment on, I wanted to understand what the limit is between pornography and decoration and how the

multiplication of a censored element is actually its cancellation. Inside the book you can see the original screenshot hidden between the pages of the book. Resuming the voyeuristic act of seeing through a lock.

PH: One could also see in your artistic research the relation between the private and the public. Many of your works are very much connected to your private life, but I also like the fact that you leave on the observer to add the meaning. As Marcel Duchamp said, 'public creates half of the work.' Do you agree on that?

MS: The pages of this book are translucent, allowing a glimpse of a body touching them or the object behind them. They are not totally transparent and do not let us understand what is happening, but they allow us to understand and interpret it.

And this is how curtains in front of windows, window displays or glasses misted by one's own breath work. My research focuses on this threshold that allows a glimpse of the inside and the outside, a partial view where a part is hidden and can be imagined. Whether it is the inside of a room or a body.

PH: You have decided to set the opening date of the exhibition at Hošek Contemporary for 27th April 2021, when the full moon in Scorpio appears. What is your relationship with the moon and zodiac? Do you believe in horoscopes and follow the lunar cycle in your daily routine?

MS: In the *Orlando Furioso*, Ariosto describes man's need to rely on magical nonsense. A criticism of a society which, in the middle ages, traumatised by events, relied completely on a belief, be it catholic or astrological. Not so far from us!

Searching through the anatomy information of the time and astrology studies there are lines

that connect the body to the cosmos in a dance of two. I find it very fascinating how humanity in the course of its evolution has wanted to tend these threads towards the stars to give answers to its doubts.

Personally, I do not follow the phases of the moon, although by regulating the tides I suppose it also influences the water inside our bodies; I find the horoscope a series of fortuitous coincidences that have been repeated for millennia!

PH: Talking about the Moon - we have been talking about the book and the exhibition for months over the phone and sending each other pictures of the moon while you were living in Milano and I have been in Berlin. I recall this feeling, when I looked at the sky and would see the moon, I would immediately think of you and hardly actually know you. I would take a picture and send it to you and you would sometimes do the same. It was like the moon was our meeting point :).

MS: Yes, it was a very nice way to communicate and somehow understand each other!

I spent months into the research process working on the book and I was completely surrounded by medieval references of the Moon and astrology in general related to the human body. But your pictures and our exchange was a reminder of how contemporary the charm of the moon is and how it can influence a relation is between humans.

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