



PAREIDOLIA. I see faces everywhere

PAREIDOLIA
I see faces everywhere

opening
February 10th, 2023
from 18:30 to 22:00

The exhibition runs from
February 10th to March
19th, 2023
Wednesday — Sunday,
from 12:00 to 18:00

Do you see what I see? Seven international artists and designers present works exploring the allegorical power of the mask, an artistic-ritualistic object to forge identities and the human body into an alter ego. Pareidolia. i see faces everywhere, is conceived by Zaven.

A commonly experienced phenomenon where our pre-existing knowledge of the world merges with our illusions and the subconscious, pareidolia has been for long time considered a symptom of psychosis. Indeed, it is a universal cognitive process that subtends humankind's reassuring need to recognize and therefore familiarize with the unknown. There are countless of examples of faces and other objects seen in the clouds, the moon and in the colour grades of the sky. One fact remains: does what we think to see really exist? Has it ever existed or have we ever seen it?

Pareidolia brings together seven international artists and designers, whose selected works explore themes of artifice, fantasy, abstraction, identity, self-representation, spirituality, subversion and the subconscious too. It does so by the means of an illusionary encounter with a series of differently shaped masks, disguised in mirrors, flags, sculptures, vases, carpets and photographic portraits of shaman-like anonymous personas directing mysterious ancestral rites.

From pagan rituals to political actions, the mask has been used as a tool to experience alternative forms of self-expression and a vehicle to enter in a body and state of mind other than ours. Among the oldest historical artefacts that the human being has invented,

shaped, designed or drawn, the mask has a long cultural history –one deeply characterized by the search for the ontological (immaterial) selfhood. When we wear a mask, who or what is the real subject of that experience? How does the conscious suddenly leave space to the unconscious?

In Pareidolia artworks become metaphysical objects –they are characters emerging from a reality that stands outside our material perception of the surrounding world. They are symbols of protest hidden behind colourful geographical patterns; ropes modelled into eccentric yet ironic figures of the self and its intuitions; ceramic creatures where the experiential quality of the artist's thoughts and feelings is condensed in the absence of a recognizable form; mirroring surfaces in which we either get lost or find ourselves; tapestries and vases that open the door to the opportunity of reimagining the cultural history of humankind.

In the different articulations of a collective search for another imaginable "I", all exhibited works provide some theoretical possibilities of a reality that supersedes the limitations of our mind. Even when we rule out everything else, isn't it true –ironic but strangely satisfying– that still we are left with the desire for some experience of the unconscious?

**Exhibiting
artists**

Giovanni De Francesco

Photograph inserted in a project, still unpublished, of cotton and resin masks in which the folds of the fabric draw the expression of ghostly faces. The "wet t-shirt" effect underlines the sensuality of the body and, as in the famous Veiled Christ, demonstrates, reveals, how concealing can be a way of underlining and highlighting the subject.

The Fe.Fe.Ly.C.Pa.Mi.Qu.Fa series consists of eight plaster and resin bas-reliefs made from the remains of other sculptures. These parts merge with drippings of the same material and are completed with the grafting of casts and artificial fragments of the human face, thus suggesting the vision of a dissolved face. As in a cartoon, this dramatic disintegration appears ironic in its unreal transposition, amplified by the pink hues that often recur in the artist's production. Each of these "masks" is identified with the title of a film (the directors' initials make up the name of the series, taking up the well-known episodic film Ro.Go.Pa.G) to reveal the visible and the invisible, merge in the construction of an identity.

Lucia Massari

A series of mirrors inspired by Arcimboldo composed of swirls, rosettes, flowers and leaves – some of the most typical elements of craftwork on Venetian mirrors – in the place of beards, eyes, noses and hair. The mask and the mirror are both typical Venetian artistic products: combining the two creates a new mask which maintains the decorative details typical of the antique Venetian mirror while downplaying any seriousness with irony and levity.

Bertjan Pot

"After making masks out of synthetic rope and yarn for years, I thought it was time to give some more organic materials a go. Grass seemed an obvious material, because I could harvest it myself. I really enjoy a good, precisely made hand coiled basket, but when I have to make it myself I know I get very impatient if the process is too slow and repetitive. So I allowed myself to be very sloppy and fast which resulted in these characters. There are only a few of them yet, because I am restricted by the harvesting season (winter) and they also take a lot longer to make than their synthetic rope cousins."

Jaime Hayon

The work of Jaime Hayon, revolves around a personal imaginary, where stages of characters, small or large, define and design objects, paintings, installations and environments. Hayon's relationship with specific materials, his theory of color, the technique of drawing, ethnographic curiosity in studying cultural and productive contexts all show the proximity between his art and the contemporary debate on cultural appropriation and inclusivity. His curiosity sets his way to assimilate arts, crafts and techniques from different backgrounds and countries enforcing an ongoing aesthetic development.

Damien Poulain

"In the hope of recognizing myself in everything that surrounds me, I see faces that accompany me with kindness throughout my travels. These faces appearing in the sandstone of a keyhole, in a corner of an architectural element, an iron gate, they are personified elements that make me appreciate the world with a certain form of humour and delicacy, it is

somehow comforting. Behind each object or construction hides a man or a woman, a sensitive being that I multiply in my creations. I am myself in everything I see and it carries part of someone else too. Alone and together."

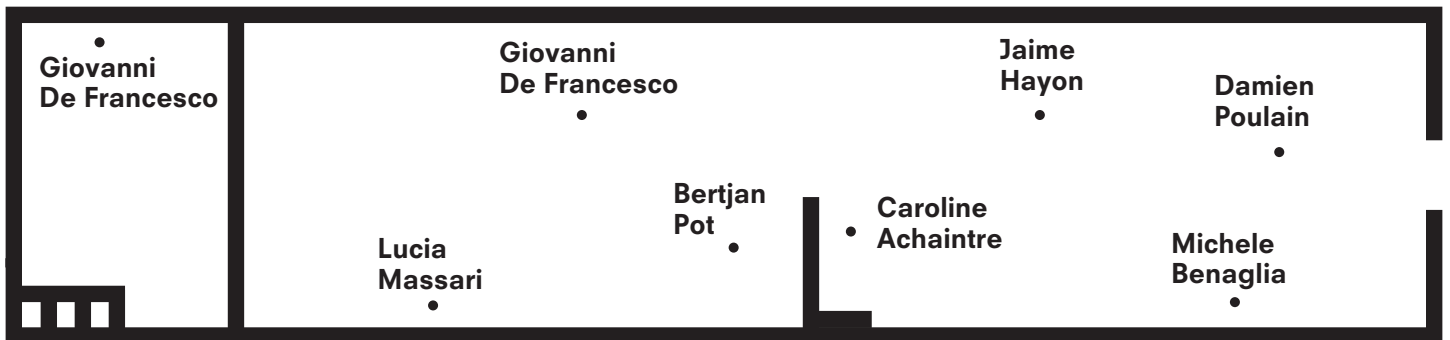
Caroline Achaintre

Inspired at once by European carnivals, primitivism, German Expressionism and science fiction, Caroline Achaintre's work on the one hand evokes the possible coexistence of several characters within a same being as well as the tensions generated by duality. No precise indication is given as to how to approach the work of Achaintre. We see in turn a mask, a garment, an animal... Her works have the particular feature of being difficult to define. At once abstract and figurative, they reveal anthropomorphic forms and indicate a particular interest for animism. The mutation of forms and the plurality of possible interpretations engage the mind and the whim of the viewer. This is the strength of Caroline Achaintre's work: to question our own capacity to be in the world as individuals defined by complex and multiple identities.

Michela Benaglia

Savages, Fools and Bears are characters that come from the dawn of time. They are represented in traditional myths and ancestral rites all over the world as anthropological masks that sometimes are very similar one to the other. It is quite impossible to know the certain age of their origins and they have been found in Countries that have had no contact with each others. Anthropologists don't have a unique explanation for this. The only certain thing is that the Mask is a bridge between the Man and the Nature

/ God and that the deepest instincts of the human race have been remained the same in times. A man who wears a Mask is hidden behind it and nobody knows his real identity. A man with a mask becomes something different from himself as there is a metamorphosis into the Beast, he comes closer to the Underworld. Starting from the western world's fear of the covered face, I have found an incredible treasure of Savages, Fools and Bears living in ancestral ceremonies and pagan rites that sometimes have turned into Christian ones. These creatures live in very small villages, mostly in the remotest mountain regions where the inhabitants represent them in folkloristic or religious rituals once a year, trying to preserve these fading traditions.



Giovanni De Francesco

• HI HI HI, 2023
Color photographic print
70x105 cm
Courtesy the artist

Fe.Fe.Ly.C.Pa.Mi.Qu.Fa

• Senza Titolo
(Elephant man), 2018
Plaster, resin, googly eyes
33x27x6 cm

• Senza Titolo
(The addiction), 2018
Plaster, resin, synthetic hair
31x28x4 cm

• Senza Titolo
(Giulietta degli spiriti), 2018
Plaster, resin,
Fake eyelashes
33x28x5 cm

• Senza Titolo
(Dead ringers), 2018
plaster, enamel
36x32x8 cm

• Senza Titolo
(La ricotta), 2021
Plaster, resin
28x28x8 cm

• Senza Titolo
(Institute Benjamenta),
2023
Plaster, resin
34x30x11 cm

• Senza Titolo
(Nausicaä), 2023
Plaster, mirrored lenses
33x30x6 cm

• Senza Titolo
(Le lacrime amare
di Petra Von Kant), 2023
Plaster, resin, synthetic hair
29x37x5 cm

Courtesy the artist

Lucia Massari

• Lady and Gentleman
Mirrors, 2019
Produced by Barbini
Specchi Veneziani

Bertjan Pot

• Grass Masks, 2021
Grass and colored
cotton string
Private Collection

Jaime Hayon

• Baile, 2022
ceramic
Produced by Bosa

Damien Poulain

• Less alone,
More Together, 2023
3 cotton flags
150x250 cm
Courtesy Damien Poulain

Caroline Achaintre

• Commandatore, 2022
Hand tufted wool
125x65 cm
Courtesy Caroline
Achaintre et Art :
Concept, Paris

Michela Benaglia

• The Savage, the Fool and
the Bear, 2017 - ongoing
6 Digital print
70x100 cm
Courtesy the artist



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Concepita da

Zaven
@_zaven_

Creative director

Augusto Maurandi
@spaziopunch

Graphic design

Metodo Studio
@metodostudio

Ringraziamenti speciali

Art : Concept
Carolina Raquel Antich
Barbini Specchi Veneziani
Marta Bastasin
Bosa Ceramiche
Marta Girardin
Anthony Knight
Paolo Palma
Tommaso Speretta

Artisti in mostra

Caroline Achaintre
@caroline_achaintre

Michela Benaglia
@michela_benaglia

Giovanni de Francesco
@giovannidefrancesco

Jaime Hayon
@jaimehayon

Lucia Massari
@luciamassari_

Damien Poulain
@damienpoulain

Bertjan Pot
@bertjanpot

Spazio Punch
Giudecca 800/o, Venezia

info@spaziopunch.com
@spaziopunch
spaziopunch.com

Boat stop
Giudecca Palanca