

MIMMOSCOGNAMIGLIO ARTECONTEMPORANEA

Metaphysical

curated by James Putnam

Opening: Tuesday, September 16th, 2014 - 6 pm

Period: September 17th – December 30th, 2014

Opening Hours: Tue - Sat | 3 to 7pm

Location: Via Privata Giovanni Ventura, 6 (entrance in Via Massimiano, 27) - Milan, Italy

The sublime and spiritual, which is fundamental to our human sensibility, tends to have little significance to a contemporary art market increasingly preoccupied with materialistic values. Also the ironic character of much contemporary art is diametrically opposed to the spiritual impulse.

Metaphysical is an exhibition of works by eight very different contemporary artists that aims to convey an experience of transcending materiality with an abstract sense of the spiritual without alluding to any specific religion.

Metaphysical is an intriguing term that is not easily defined but it's about things that are thought to exist but cannot be seen, a kind of reality beyond what is perceptible to the senses. The word is a combination of "meta-" (beyond) "physical" (nature) that suggests something supernatural or outside everyday experience or knowledge.

This exhibition by prominent international artists involves works in different mediums that aim to express this aura of the metaphysical.

Participating artists: Rina Banerjee, Paul Benney, Adam Fuss, Gonkar Gyatso, Michael Joo, Jason Martin, Chiharu Shiota, Kiki Smith.

JASON MARTIN

He was born in 1970 in the Channel Islands, UK, and studied at Goldsmiths University, in London. He now lives and works both in London and Lisbon. Jason Martin took part in *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection*, the exhibition that set forth his entrance to the international art world, in 1997. Ever since, the artist has been exhibited in the most important museums, such as the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice (2009) and he has won two awards: the Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art (1999) and the European Biennial of the Visual Arts of La Spezia (2000). He is mainly known for his monochromatic paintings. Jason Martin's works fluctuate through tension and quiet. His art embodies vitality and energy generating a simultaneity of the image among action and dynamism. His constant quality lies both on a perpetual movement and on a continuous need to question himself and all the infinite ways of painting. Everything calls to mind the dynamism of a "single act" unifying creation and glaze, perfection and observation.

KIKI SMITH

She was born in 1954 in Nuremberg, Germany. Since 1976, she has lived and worked in New York. The artist has exhibited in the most eminent American museums such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and at the Museum of Contemporary Art, in Los Angeles. Smith focuses on a plurality of themes, some of them resulting from her biography. The central theme in her artwork is the human corporeality, with focus on the feminine. The female body becomes a battlefield for political and social ideologies. Next to a series of motives related to mortality and decay, there are those related to birth and reproduction. Another subject of her work is the animal kingdom, especially the vulnerability of birds and the savagery of wolves evoking the condition of mankind. Kiki Smith is best known for her sculptures, her prints and her engravings: "Prints mimic what we are as humans: we are all the same and yet every one is different. I think there's a spiritual power in repetition, a devotional quality, like saying rosaries". Kiki Smith, 1998.

MIMMO SCOGNAMIGLIO S.R.L.

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CHIHARU SHIOTA

She was born in 1972 in Osaka, Japan. She studied for her MFA in Japan and then went on to study with Marina Abramović in Germany. She currently lives and works in Berlin. Chiharu Shiota regularly exhibits in the galleries of many cities such as New York, Berlin, Zurich, Paris and Milan, whose most prominent museums host her work in their permanent collections. The artist has been selected to represent Japan at the 56th Edition of the Biennale d'Arte di Venezia (2015), where "The Key in the hand", curated by Hitoshi Nakano, will be displayed. Chiharu Shiota's uses her body as a tool for interventions, through this medium she creates performances related to the earth, the past and the memory. Furthermore, she is well known for her installations mainly made from broken windows, luggage, old clothes, shoes with threads entangling various objects. While these objects give life to disquieting feelings, they also burst out memories of the past, accumulated by mankind through time.

ADAM FUSS

He was born in 1961 in London, he lives and works in New York, where he moved in 1982. Adam Fuss's works are displayed in the permanent collections of the main American museums such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco. After his initial career as an advertising photographer, the artist started favoring early camera-less photographic techniques, such as photograms and daguerreotypes, inspired by artists such as Man Ray and László Moholy-Nagy. His works include photograms of waterdrops, rivers, flowers, snakes, christening dresses and birds captured in flight, in order to create evocative and enigmatic images that explore the mystery, complexity and transience of life.

GONKAR GYATSO

He was born in 1961 in Lhasa, Tibet. In the nineties, he moved to London where he graduated from the Chelsea School of Art and Design. He still lives and works in London. Gyatso is one of the most important contemporary Tibetan artists. His works have been exhibited in galleries and museums all around the world, among which the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and the Chinese National Art Gallery in Beijing. In 2009, Gonkar Gyatso took part in the 53rd Edition of the Biennale d'Arte di Venezia. He is mainly known for the use of pop images and icons enclosed within the form of Buddha, or sculptures of Buddha totally covered by stickers representing characters of popular cartoons, advertising and magazines. His art is often related to political satire and it represents an explicit stance on mass culture of the XXI century.

"Just as the identity of my homeland cannot be separated from religion and politics, so my own sensibility has been shaped by the undeniable bond between the two". Gonkar Gyatso

MICHAEL JOO

He was born in 1966 in Ithaca, USA. He studied at Washington University and then Yale Art School. He lives and works in New York. Joo's works have been acquired by many public and private collections, such as the FNAC in Paris, the Guggenheim, the Museum of Modern Art and of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. The artist creates narratives that explore places, people and objects by re-interpreting perceptions: why we perceive as we perceive – science and religion, nature and human intervention, fact and fiction, high and low culture. His work investigates the concept of identity and knowledge within a hybrid contemporary world, through a variety of media like videos, sculptures, installations made of all kinds of materials, from bamboo to human sweat, from drawings to prints. In this way, the artist tries to permanently achieve the unachievable.

RINA BANERJEE

She was born in 1963 in Calcutta, India. She graduated at the Yale Art School. She currently lives and works in Manhattan, NY. Growing up in urban cities and in multicultural and multiracial communities, gave her a way to shape her own global vision, which is the starting point of all her artistic conception. The artist has a love of different kinds of materials and objects, such as heritage textiles; ethnic, colonial and architectural furnishings, chosen by Rina for their ability to disguise, animate and locate their inherent meanings in her art work. In her multimedia installations other varied objects and souvenirs are used, like taxidermy alligators, wooden cots, fish bones and shells strung up or nestled in with feathers and umbrellas. Her richly textured works complicate the role of objects as representations of cultures and invite viewers to share her fascination for materials. By juxtaposing organic and plastic objects she concocts fairytale worlds that are both enticing and subtly menacing.

"My work explores specific colonial moments that reinvent place and identity as complex diasporic experiences intertwined and sometimes surreal". Rina Banerjee.

PAUL BENNEY

He was born in 1959 in London, where he currently lives and works, after having spent time in New York. In recent years, Benney made a distinctive and singular group of works both in USA and in UK. His works have been displayed in private and public collections all over the world, such as the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Australian National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery in London. Benney has been considered a key member of the Neo-Expressionist group of the early 80's in New York's East Village and he became known for his grim depictions of the dark side of the soul. The artist paints figures which, while their meanings can never quite be fixed, embody some sense of our spiritual quest. Also one of the country's leading portrait artists, he has painted many prominent cultural and political figures.

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