

GALLERIA CONTINUA

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GIOVANNI OZZOLA

Fallen Blossom - Whispering

Opening: 14th December 2017

Galleria Continua is pleased to host the second solo exhibition in Beijing of Giovanni Ozzola.

Ozzola is a multidisciplinary artist; his work involves the public through diverse sensory and cognitive experiences. Photographic images, sculptural objects, and video installations are experienced by the viewer in their essential nature and express an ability to communicate with people's emotional memory.

The work of Giovanni Ozzola demonstrates the irrefutable signs of his endless research and observation. The importance of light, its presence or absence, as it reveals and hides landscapes, objects and (more rarely) people, enlightening the uniqueness of every instant. In his favourite subjects we recognize recurrent and cyclical themes: Time, Nature, and the furtive intervention of human beings; doors and windows, broken walls and cracks that open up to the view of a perfect intimidating seascape or the undulating motion of the desert. Sceneries at the mercy of temporary and transitory climates, such as: a sunset, a distant storm, the imminent approach of the night,

and *calima*. Night visions of rivers, shrubs and flowers, garages, bunkers and wrecked houses covered by graffiti, tormented love messages on walls coloured by mould and lichens. Minimalist spaces where the Light and the Darkness are protagonists in a composition of essential elements, perhaps clandestinely present or passing by; buildings undergoing construction whose gaze is alone and silent whilst facing the outside, towards the sky, towards the sea, towards the wind...

This last theme reappears in the photographic works of Ozzola for his Beijing solo exhibition. A construction site in which the bare concrete structure does not allow the viewer to identify the location, but whose windows to the outside are a dizzying look onto a solid horizon, the Beijing skyline, just as the sun is about to set and it announces the darkness, and the artificial coloured lights of the city take over the otherwise dark sky.

In the series *Vanitas* the stealthy view of the camera lens on the flowers at night becomes even more mysterious and sensual through the

introduction of a new material: the artist's photographs are imprinted on velvet rather than on paper. The choice to add an element that by its nature plays with light helps make even more dramatic the view of the subject. According to how the observer positions himself in the room the artworks' light changes. In painting terms by Vanitas we mean a Still Life, a pictorial genre closely related to a sense of precariousness and the transience of life *vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas*, a warning of the ephemeral condition of existence, a message of which flowers are symbolic conveyors.

Untitled - estoy pecando and *Untitled* with colour are Ozzola's most recent works. They are made to reveal themselves in a more physical and pictorial form. The method the artist uses this time refers to an eighteenth-century technique of "fresco tear" that was performed with the use of hot glue. Once more Ozzola chooses sites of abandonment, uninhabited and marginal locations, his interventions are made with different media among which silicon penetrates into the lacerations on the walls into the engraved inscriptions and graffiti, capturing traces from the wall, colours and writing obtaining their visibility in negative.

Ozzola's choice to use slates, for his work *Monte Bianco*, is linked to the stone's history and special characteristics. Used in ancient times as a basis for writing, it is composed of layers of rock, representing the accumulation of time, like experiences in man's life. Engraved on Ozzola's slates, as if it was earth its self, we find portraits of travel routes that roam the unknown, adventures and visions of stormy seas or mountain peaks. The natural anthracite colour of this stone allows for an excellent

base to bring out the light, the reflection of the moon on the crest of waves or on the frozen peaks of a mountain... Once more, the pure poetry of light and the moment is captured.

Closely related to his photographic work, other sculptural works and video installations narrate visions of Light and its perception, the furtive presence of humans on earth. *Stealth - invisible shipwrecks*, "invisible" geometric figures, a work that Ozzola realised after frequent visits to the IDS centre in Pisa, reveals fragments of aerial and naval forms created so as not to be identifiable by radar and remain invisible (Stealth technology). These simple and at the same time absurd forms, like wrecks surrendered to time, multiply and emerge from the ground, as if from the bottom of the sea, thanks to the breaking of light on their oblique and sharp surfaces. Like stormy waves, they break off the floor and climb upwards. Their interior is a blue colour like the reflection of the ocean at night.

The video work, placed on the ground floor, is titled *Sin tiempo*. It was made by Ozzola in honour of an antique language from the Canary archipelago. It is a whistled language that was mainly used to communicate at great distances through the deep valleys that cross the island of Gomera. Not much is known of the original language but the Guanches whistled before the arrival of the Spanish settlers. (From 2009, it was recognised as a masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO). *Sin tiempo* approaches this wonderful oral language with the sensitivity and pure curiosity, devoid of judgment, that the artist applies to all of his research. The unusual view from the

camera becomes the wind its self and it rises over the sea as it advances to reach the opposite coast. In the distance the silhouette of a human presence becomes clearer. The young Guanche, whose whistle very few people are able to understand, finds his eternal witnesses and companion in the sea and in the wind. His thoughts and poetry are contained in the deep culture of this archipelago, today the artist's home.

Paying attention to the small details that in life can sometimes amaze, noticeable traces of life are born leaning on rebar, milling cutters, girders, and chains... They are all materials born from human cleverness, abandoned and contaminated by time, corroded by water. These disused objects are inhabited by snails, *Chioccioline - your lips make me nervous*, small creatures that carry on their back the perfect mathematical expression of the golden ratio. Yet these wonderful forms of life seem to be attracted to their opposite, nourished by rust.

Plants - tu lunares son estrellas, Bronze leafs are artificially created following mother nature's steps, like the lymph nourishing the steam running upwards until it reaches the leafs, so the liquefied bronze slowly reaches the capillary extremities of the mould filling each gap, giving the expected shape to the work. Once again the light plays a fundamental role, reflecting on the little bronze shells and open leafs, making them shine and emerge as if they were alive in this very moment.

In, *Ni olvido, ni perdono*, a shaded neon light is hanging on a rusted naval chain. Memories of life's journeys navigating through furious and quiet oceans. In life man wants to be able to forget and forgive, but there are

forces and energies that like solid chains won't allow letting go.

In Ozzola's work, sculptural installations, as much as photographs, are places of meditation where opposite realities live side-by-side, coexisting harmoniously.

BIOGRAPHY

Giovanni Ozzola was born in 1982 in Florence, Italy and currently lives and works in Tenerife, Canary Islands.

Starting his career in 2001 as part of the group show; Happiness: A Survival Guide for Art and Life, curated by David Elliott and Pier Luigi Tazzi, at the Mori Art Museum of Tokyo in Japan; Ozzola has since exhibited world-wide. Ozzola most recently presented a solo exhibition titled, Wrecks and Rooms with Starsat the untitled Association Lynchen in Berlin, Germany in 2017. His 2016 solo exhibitions include; Cercando Nella Notte Persaat Spazio 9Aposa in Bologna, Italy; Sistemi di Visione/Sistemi de Realtá at the Centro Espositivo per le Arti Contemporanee, San Michele Degli Scalzi (SMS) in Pisa, Italy; adrift at the District Six Museum Homecoming Centre in Cape Town and SMAC Gallery in Stellenbosch, South Africa; as well as Scars at SMAC Gallery in Cape Town, South Africa.

Ozzola has since exhibited internationally with works held in numerous private and public collections, including MART, Rovereto, Italy; Chelsea Art Museum, New York, USA; Sharjah Maraya Art Center, Dubai; Mori Museum, Tokyo, Japan; Schunck- Glaspaleis, Herleen, Netherlands; Künstlerhaus Palais Thurn Und Taxis, Bregenz, Austria; Galleria Continua, San Gimignano / Beijing / Le Moulin; Palazzo delle Papesse, Siena, Italy; Man Museo d'Arte, Nuoro, Italy; Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan; Centre d'Art Bastille, Grenoble, France; GC,AC, Monfalcone, Italy; Viafarini Docva, Milan, Italy; Centro Arti Visive Pescheria, Pesaro, Italy; OCAT - Contemporary Art Terminal, Shanghai; Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China; START Museum, Shanghai; 2139, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; District Six Museum, Cape Town, South Africa.

Among Ozzola's awards are the Premio Cairo (2011), Premio Terna (2008) and Seat Pagine Gialle (2007).